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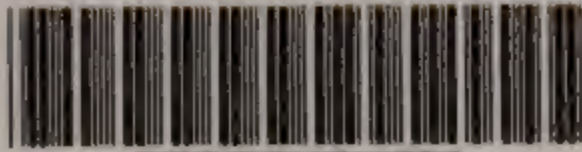
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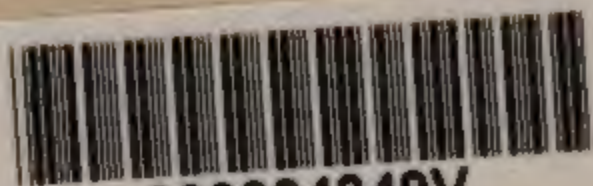
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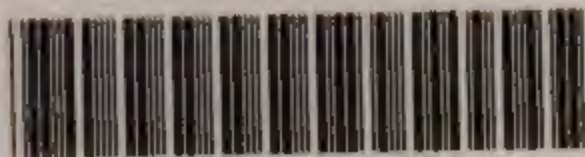
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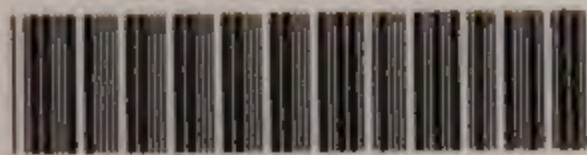
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RUINS OF RUTHVALE ABBEY.



A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

THE
RUINS OF RUTHVALE ABBEY.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MRS. GOLLAND,

(LATE MISS HAYNES,)

**AUTHOR OF THE FOUNDLING OF DEVONSHIRE, ELEANOR, OR THE SPECTRE
OF ST. MICHAEL'S, AUGUSTUS AND ADELINE, &c. &c.**

Be thou chaste as ice, or pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny. SHAKESPEARE.

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RUINS OF RUTHVALE ABBEY.

CHAPTER I.

IT was not long before Mrs. Lloyd made her reappearance, as she seemed as anxious to communicate the rest of her story as they did to hear it.

“Let me see,” she resumed—“where did I leave off? oh, when my lady first came to meet my lord, who arrived about two months afterwards. We had such rejoicings on the joyful occasion—the poor were feasted, and all the servants had quite a jubilee; we had none of us seen our master before, for my lady had *dismissed all her London servants*, and brought

none with her but the nurse to Miss Alicia. Well, and so, as I was saying, it was a happy meeting between my lord and lady, and in a few minutes the child was ordered to be brought to him. Nurse told me that her ladyship took the child from her arms, and presented it herself to my lord, exclaiming—‘Behold your child!’

“His lordship clasped it to his bosom with ecstasy, and then again embracing his lady, said—‘My adored Alicia, I did not think it was possible ever to have loved you better than I did before; but this dear child renders you still dearer to my heart than ever: you now possess a double claim on my affections—my wife, and the mother of my child.’

“Lady Melbourne was extremely agitated at the rapture of her lord; her feelings, I suppose, overcame her, and she fell into a strong hysteric fit. I was summoned to her aid, and she soon recovered; and never shall I forget the tender concern of my lord, who hung over her with agony until she revived; after this she be-

came more composed, and happiness reigned around.

“ Two years passed on in this tranquil state, during which time Miss Alicia grew a sweet child: she was the pet of the whole house, and though certainly indulged to excess by her parents, yet her temper was never spoiled, and she was the delight of all around; but, poor child! she was doomed to lose her best friend when about five years old—lord Melbourne was seized with a fever, which terminated his life.

“ Alas, the change that now took place! her ladyship was distracted; she shut herself up in her apartment—would see no one, or scarcely taste any food, for days together—and we all feared that her life would fall the sacrifice. At last I resolved to make one effort to arouse her; I stole into her room, with Miss Alicia in my arms. At the sight of the child she burst into a fresh flood of tears—‘ Pardon me, my lady,’ I cried, ‘ if I venture to say, that it is wrong to encourage this excess

of grief. I know how great is your loss, but Heaven's will must be done—we must submit to its all-wise decrees, and by patience acquire fortitude and resignation, which can alone support us in the hour of trial: consider, dear lady, your own valued life is at stake.'

'Of what value is that?' interrupted she; 'my life is a burden to me—I wish not to preserve it.'

'Say not so, lady,' I replied; 'look at this dear babe—would you not wish to live for her sake? what is to become of her if you die? would you wish to deprive her of her only friend that is left?'

'*Her only friend!*' repeated she, in a wildness of accent that alarmed me—'thou sayest true—I *am indeed her only friend now*—it would be barbarous in me to desert her. Yes, sweet child, for thee I will endeavour to endure existence. My sainted husband adored thee, and for his sake I will watch over thee with a mother's tender eye.'

"She took the child, from me, and I

was glad to see she became more calm, and from that hour she gradually recovered; a settled melancholy, however, took possession of her mind: the room in which my master died was hung with black, nor would she suffer any of the dismal trappings to be removed, and to this day they remain the same.

“ At length my lady declared that she could not be happy in the house, where every object reminded her of her loss: a sorrow seemed to prey upon her very existence, and it was thought most advisable that she should change the scene. I was left in charge of this house, and in a sorrowful hour I bade adieu to my lady and her sweet child; and never have I beheld either from that time, though, as I before told you, it is twenty years ago, and I almost despaired of ever seeing them again, when a short time since I received a letter from my dear lady, giving directions to have the house elegantly repaired, in order to receive her and family; adding, that Miss Alicia was now married in London

to lord Athlyn; and that it was his lordship's wish to behold this beautiful place, he being himself of Welsh extraction; that lady Alicia Athlyn had also a great desire to revisit the scenes of her youth—
'Therefore,' continued lady Melbourne, 'I have yielded to their pressing request, though it will cost me much to behold that place where I lost my every hope of earthly happiness.'

"This letter," added Mrs. Lloyd, "has given me new life, and I am now daily looking forward for their arrival. Lady Alicia, of course, I sha'n't know again; but I am sure I shall love her as much as when an infant, and if her temper be but as sweet as it was then, she will be an angel. And now, ladies, I have told you my story, which I fear you will think long and tiresome."

"Not at all, my good Mrs. Lloyd," said lady Charlotte; "we are much obliged to you for the interesting recital, and congratulate you on its happy termination, and most sincerely do I hope poor

lady Melbourne will have derived fortitude sufficient to enable her to enjoy the beauties of this place."

"Would you like to view the house, ladies?" inquired the good-natured Mrs. Lloyd; "I can shew you their pictures, if you will walk this way."

They complied with her invitation, and followed her into a beautiful dining-parlour, even with the hall, which was fitted up in a style of ancient splendor, and so large, that its extent could scarcely be discerned. The windows on one side looked out into a beautiful flower-garden, through which a pearly stream was seen to run: art and nature were here combined, to please the eye and gratify the mind. Leaving this, they ascended a large staircase to a most superb drawing-room; large glasses in massy frames were suspended round the room, and reflected from every part the costly ornaments of the chamber. A large bow window at the back commanded a view of the distant hills, and the Vale of Clwyd; here was

also the river Dee to be seen in full perfection; and nothing was wanting, either within or without, to make the place a paradise.

The ladies expressed their admiration of this charming spot, and followed Mrs. Lloyd through a long gallery, when opening a door, she cried—"Now, ladies,—I shall shew you a great contrast: this is the chamber of death—it was here my master breathed his last."

Lady Charlotte and Rosa involuntarily shuddered as they entered this room, which exhibited a sombre appearance: the furniture, though kept in order, and quite clean, was old fashioned and dismal: the walls were hung with black, and the trussels on which the coffin had stood yet remained in the room, as likewise several other funereal emblems, which lady Melbourne had given orders not to have removed.

"I never enter this room," said Mrs. Lloyd, "but I think of my poor master; I could almost fancy I saw him now

stretched upon that couch; on that very bed he died!"

Rosa directed her eyes towards a large state bed, which appeared mouldering into dust; she shuddered with inward horror—it reminded her of the dismal appearance of the rooms in Ruthvale Abbey, and under the impression of the mysteries which she had witnessed there, she dreaded lest something should now arise to excite her alarm. All, however, was quiet—no ghost pervaded this chamber, although it was that of death; the spirit of lord Melbourne rested in peace, and no terrors had yet arisen to disturb the tranquillity of the living. The morning sun darted through the windows, and cast a cheerful ray even in this gloomy chamber; and Mrs. Lloyd did not even relate a syllable of spirits wandering ill at ease, which is in general the result of such a circumstance.

"Come, ladies," said the old housekeeper; "I must not detain you here—I shall make you melancholy; I will now shew

you the picture-gallery, and that is all that will be worth your view."

They immediately obeyed her summons, and followed her to the place, where a number of portraits were hanging; they consisted chiefly of the ancestors of the house of Melbourne, dressed in old-fashioned costumes. In a large and elegant frame was a full-length picture of lord Melbourne, attired in a naval uniform. Mrs. Lloyd assured them it was a striking likeness. The face was manly and expressive, while the figure was at once commanding and noble. In another frame, of rich and exquisite workmanship, was the portrait of lady Melbourne, with her infant daughter by her side. Her ladyship was indeed handsome; she possessed a fair complexion, with light blue eyes, which beamed more with tender expression than vivacity; light tresses overshadowed her forehead, and gave a pleasing effect to the *tout ensemble*: she was smiling on her child, who was climbing on her knee. The infant was also beauti-

ful, and exhibited a countenance which promised to ripen into loveliness.

Lady Charlotte felt particularly interested with this picture, and continued to gaze on it for some minutes.—“The child does not appear to resemble either of its parents,” said her ladyship; “I cannot trace the least likeness.”

“No, madam,” replied Mrs. Lloyd, “Miss Alicia was not like either my lord or my lady; but she may perhaps have grown more so now—children alter so much from their infancy.”

“The countenance seems familiar to me, I think,” said Rosa; “I know not when, but such a one I think I have seen.”

They merely smiled at this observation, and taking a last glance, they left the place, and thanking Mrs. Lloyd for her very great kindness, they departed, and taking the road which she had directed them, they arrived in safety at Rosewood Hall. They found themselves quite fatigued with their ramble; and Mr. Montague was awaiting their return with some

anxiety, having protracted their walk, so much longer than he expected ; and knowing they had gone out unattended, he felt rather uneasy. They related to him their morning's adventure, to which he listened with surprise. He knew the ancient edifice of Melbourne, but had never seen the interior, or heard the history of its owners.

The ladies were obliged to hasten to their own rooms, in order to change their dress for dinner ; and here Rosa summoned Mary, with her child. She clasped it with maternal fondness to her bosom, and with delight viewed the stamp of health which glowed on its cheek : she drew a comparison mentally to the story she had been listening to and her own sorrows, and it brought this conviction with it, that all have their trials—lady Melbourne, though surrounded with wealth and power, was unhappy ; she had lost the greatest charm which made life desirable to her—death had bereaved her of the partner of her heart, and left her isolated and forlorn. “ Alas ! ” sighed Rosa, “ who shall we

pronounce as happy in this vale of sorrow! none are destined to enjoy the cup long, for were we allowed to taste its sweets without alloy, we should become too attached to the false glare of this transitory world, therefore

To hope for happiness is vain,
And joy has ever its alloys of pain. ROSA.

CHAPTER II.

It was some time before Rosa could gain an opportunity of gratifying her wish, with regard to her intended visit to Ruthvale Abbey, as lady Charlotte had been with her in all her walks. At length, that lady having accompanied Mr. Montague in the carriage for a morning ride, she resolved to seize the opportunity; and directing Mary to walk with her child another way, she took the path to the abbey. The morning sun gilded the

horizon with its radiant beams, and darting its lustre on the ruins, took off some degree of its gloom ; and endeavouring to call all her fortitude to her aid, she ascended the broken steps which led to the apartment she wished to explore. All was still, and every thing apparently in the same state as when she had last left it : with eager curiosity she advanced to the couch, when her own name again met her view. She eagerly proceeded to examine the other sentences, but dirt and dust had almost obliterated them, and rendered some quite unintelligible ; one sentence, however, almost overpowered her.—“ *Oh, my wife, my child ! Beloved Rosa, shall we then meet no more on earth ? Oh, cruel——*”

The rest of this was entirely illegible with dirt ; and vain were the attempts of our heroine to read it ; her feelings were wound up to a pitch of desperation ; she imagined she knew not what, and that this mystery was connected with her own. Trembling she examined another sentence,

which was more perfect, and ran thus:—
 “Oh, merciful Heaven! protect my poor wife. Cruel, inhuman man! will nothing but my life satisfy your flinty heart? Must I then perish? Here then I await my doom. My time is short. Oh, if ever human eye should trace these characters, may pity inspire them to revenge my *cruel murder!*”

“Murder!” re-echoed Rosa, in a voice of horror. “Oh, Heaven! and has *he* then fallen beneath the assassin’s steel? Has all my silent sufferings been in vain? Have they then ensnared him to this fatal place, here to meet his death? Oh God! perhaps even in this very room!”

“*In this very room,*” repeated a hollow voice, which sounded close to the spot on which she stood transfixed with horror; for a moment her eyes glared wildly around, expecting to see some terrific object, when, overcome by this dreadful scene, she uttered a convulsive shriek, and fell senseless to the ground.

How long she remained in this state

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she knew not; but on her recovery, she found herself reclining on a broken column among the ruins, on the outside of the abbey. For a minute she gazed wildly around, wondering what her situation was; but recollection soon returned, and pointed out the horrors to which she had been witness. She raised her head, expecting to encounter some terrific object; but how was her surprise increased, to behold the open country! how was it possible she could be there, when she had fainted in the mysterious chamber in the tower? With a desperate effort she raised her trembling form, when, turning round, she beheld a figure by her side: under the impression of her former terrors, she uttered a faint shriek, and closed her eyes.

"Be not alarmed, lady," said a voice in soothing accents, which prompted her to look on the speaker. The form was that of a man of majestic height and commanding person; his dress was wild, and his whole appearance mysterious; a large hat

partly concealed his face, but Rosa beheld a countenance indicative of sensibility, though strongly tinged with melancholy. He seemed past the meridian of life, *if life* he really possessed; but so completely wrought upon by superstition was the mind of Rosa, that she almost believed herself to be in the presence of an inhabitant of another world.—“What would you with me?” she faintly articulated.

The stranger shook his head mournfully, and gazed on her with an expression of tenderness, and was retreating from her presence.—“Stay,” cried Rosa, gaining a moment’s courage; “stay, I conjure you, and reveal, if thou canst, the mystery by which I am surrounded. How came I here, when in yon dreadful chamber I felt senseless?”

“I dare not answer you,” returned the stranger; “but, lady,” he continued, in a solemn tone, “if you regard your own peace, visit not these fatal ruins; a mystery lurks beneath their walls, which

cannot interest you. It is a pity that so much youth and beauty should be exposed to horrors like these. More I dare not say: already, by conversing with *thee*, I expose myself to danger—therefore farewell: *remember me.*”

The figure waved its hand for her to be silent, and in an instant disappeared from her sight.

With a trembling and tottering step Rosa endeavoured to quit this scene of horror; but she was so ill, she knew not how to proceed; the scene which she had gone through had so completely shocked her, that her whole frame was sinking with debility. She knew not how to reach home, and she feared her senses would again leave her: no house was near where she could procure refreshment, and she leaned for support against a tree; in this situation she remained until a man passed her, who looked full upon her as he went along; but seeing her ready to fall, he inquired if she were not well?

His appearance was by no means pre-

possessing, as his countenance was coarse and savage. Under present circumstances, however, Rosa was glad to converse with any one who wore the human form; she therefore replied by saying, she was very faint, and begged him to procure her a glass of water.

"If you can walk as far as my cottage," he replied, "I will give you some refreshment; this lane will lead us to it."

Half afraid, yet not knowing what to do, she timidly followed her conductor, and soon arrived at a small dwelling, but from which she recoiled with horror, when she found it was the lodge which Mr. Montague had pointed out to her as belonging to the abbey.

The man saw her alarm.—"Of what are you afraid?" said he. "What! I suppose now you have been frightened with some of the goblins at the ruins, and think you shall see some more here: but you need not be alarmed. I live here in peace; they don't extend their walks so far as here."

"I know not," replied Rosa, in a trembling voice, as she entered the lodge, "whether you are jesting on this mysterious subject or not, but at this present moment my feelings are not to be trifled with. If you are really the person employed to guard these ruins, you must be in possession of events which have transpired there; and I have the most weighty reasons for imploring you to reveal to me what knowledge you have of the transactions of this mysterious place."

The man looked at her with a suspicious countenance; a frown mantled on his brow as he replied—"I know nothing of the reasons which you may have for your inquiries; nor can I satisfy you any farther than by saying, that I wish I had never had any thing to do with the ruins, for they are inhabited by the very devil himself, I believe; for my part, I never go near them now, for I expect every day to find them all tumbling down, and I am not inclined to risk my life in their service; fall they must some time or other,

and the sooner the better, if it will but bury the infernal spirits along with them."

"Then you really believe," said Rosa, "that there are mysteries contained beneath the walls?"

"Mysteries enough!" he re-echoed: "if you had seen the sights I have seen, your eyes would have glared from their sockets; but however, it is past now, and I'll take care never more to risk seeing them again."

"But your employer," exclaimed Rosa—"who is he that owns these ruins?—how is he called?"

"I have no employer now," returned the man, in a sullen tone. "I thought you wanted a glass of water, and not to ask questions." So saying he handed her a glass, of which she really stood in need.—"If," resumed he, "you have been so foolish as to go to the ruins, let me advise you not to do so again. You will one day repent it, if you repeat your visits: there are horrors enough there indeed, and not fit for a female to encounter; so now,

take warning by me, and don't go that way again."

Finding she could not gain any more information from this man, and not very well pleased with her situation, she quitted the house, and with an aching heart prepared to return home. She felt afraid to encounter the presence of lady Charlotte in her present wretched state of mind, and truly glad was she, on reaching Rosewood, to find that her ladyship was still absent, and that she could dedicate an hour to reflection, and endeavour to calm her agitated spirits. In the privacy of her chamber, she reconsidered over the past events; that there was a mystery, and a fatal one, in the ruins of Ruthvale Abbey, was certain, and which in the horrors of the moment she had blended with her own. But returning reason pointed out to her the improbability of such an idea; every thing that had transpired within those walls had no doubt been of many years duration; the imperfect state of the writing, the dirt and dust

with which it was covered, proved the length of time since it must have been written; and by the accounts which she gained from almost every person, the mysteries of the abbey had been of long standing. From this circumstance she endeavoured to calm the agitation of her mind, and to persuade herself that the association of events to which she had been witness, could not in any degree connect with herself: that there had been most dreadful scenes transpire within those mouldering walls, she could not doubt; and she now resolved not to risk the encounter of such horrors, and to refrain from revisiting this spot of mystery, where, notwithstanding all her endeavours to chase away superstitious ideas, it was too clear that some spirit wandered, ill at rest; and she no longer wondered at the fears of the neighbouring peasantry, nor at their shunning with horror the ruins of Ruthvale Abbey.

CHAPTER III.

THE late events preyed upon the mind of Rosa, and caused a dejection of spirits which greatly distressed the kind lady Charlotte, who, of course, imputing it to her mournful situation, endeavoured to use every means in her power to calm her agitated spirits. She hardly ever suffered her to be alone, and a few months rolled on in successive calmness. Rosewood Hall was the seat of conjugal happiness: here was the amiable lady Charlotte rewarded for her past sufferings, in the kindness and affection of her doating husband; and here also did Mr. Montague enjoy that tranquillity and ease which his noble conduct and strict integrity so richly merited. Often would Rosa sigh at the happiness of this truly united pair; not with the sigh of envy—of that her pure bosom

was incapable of feeling; it was the sigh of regret which arose from the wreck of her own happiness: such an union as this had she once anticipated; her heart had indeed most tenderly loved an object with whom she had fondly hoped to have realized years of joy; but, alas! how transient was her dream of felicity! her hopes were wrecked, and like the foaming billows, adversity dashed all before her: yet amidst all her misery, a forlorn idea would sometimes intervene, that a day might yet arrive when her sorrows would be chased away by the presence of him who alone could assuage them. All had their trials, and even lady Charlotte, who was now enjoying as much felicity on earth as was ordained for the lot of mortals, had once been surrounded with troubles and sorrows, from which an all-wise Providence had most mercifully relieved her, and at a moment when she least expected it.—“And sure,” apostrophized Rosa, “if any one on earth is deserving to share the

blessings of life, it is the noble, the exalted lady Charlotte—she who afforded protection and succour to a friendless being like myself, when all the world beside despised me. Oh! never can I be sufficiently grateful to this amiable woman: but for her, what might I not have been?—a wretched wanderer, with an outcast babe—till perhaps driven by dire despair, I might have madly rushed into eternity.”

From this last reflection she recoiled with horror; it was an idea from which every Christian shrunk with terror; it was, as Blair has rightly termed it—“ Our island’s bane;” and again she poured out her thanks to Heaven for having sent her such a friend as lady Charlotte. How fleeting are the ideas in the bosom of humanity!—how a few short moments alter our opinions! Engaged in reflections like the above, and believing lady Charlotte to be the pattern of virtue and integrity; she had one morning taken a short ramble by herself, lady Charlotte having previously gone out alone to pay a few visits,

as she said, which Rosa always declined doing, keeping herself as much secluded as possible. She cautiously avoided the path to the abbey, and turned down some shady retired lanes, which she had walked with lady Charlotte. Deeply engaged in thought, she pursued her way, when she thought she heard voices: looking through some trees, which branched with rich foliage, and separated her from another walk, she beheld a lady and gentleman, conversing together with great familiarity; her arm was drawn within that of the gentleman, while his encircled her waist: a smile of love adorned her countenance, and she appeared to listen to his fond expressions with rapture and delight. Rosa gazed wildly, with sudden astonishment, as she beheld the features of lady Charlotte: she looked again, not daring to trust the evidence of her senses; but the figure, the form, was the same, and she could no longer doubt: as they passed she distinctly heard the gentleman pronounce

"What a sweet girl is Charlotte!"

the following sentence—"Happiness, my love, like ours, is seldom found on earth: I only fear lest I should too fully enjoy the cup, which is at best uncertain; but possessed of thy love, I envy not a monarch on his throne: my reign is in thy heart, and that is the height of my ambition."

"Flatterer," returned the soft voice of her ladyship; but the rest of the sentence was lost in the distance, and Rosa stood gazing till they were out of sight: she felt almost petrified; that the woman whom she held up as the brightest pattern on earth should be thus lost to all sense of decorum, that she should thus be violating the honour of her husband and her own marriage vows, were events almost past belief; but she could no longer doubt—she had plainly beheld the form of her ladyship, and the conviction brought with it the most painful sensations, so much so, that sickness stole over her frame, and rendered her so weak, that she could scarcely move from the spot. In a few minutes

she rallied her spirits, and not feeling inclined to prolong her walk any farther, she returned as fast as she could to Rosewood Hall.

Lady Charlotte was not yet returned, and on seeing Mr. Montague in the drawing-room, she felt embarrassed and confused. To betray lady Charlotte was impossible, and she experienced the most painful sensations; and as she viewed the strikingly open and ingenuous countenance of that gentleman, she sighed to think that so much worth and integrity was allied to deceit and perfidy. No sooner however had these ideas passed in her mind, than she accused herself of ingratitude, in suffering herself to be so soon prejudiced against the amiable lady Charlotte, who had evinced a more noble and generous sentiment towards her, when her conduct appeared in the worst light; she therefore resolved to withhold too severe censures on her ladyship's actions, until time should unravel all.

Finding herself not very able to con-

verse at ease with Mr. Montague, she withdrew; and seeing Mary at that moment entering the hall door from the road with her child, she desired her to follow her to her room, where, taking the sweet infant in her arms, she bestowed on it the most endearing caresses. She however observed that Mary was agitated, and that she trembled violently. Ever quickly alive to catch at any fresh alarms, Rosa instantly inquired the cause; and if any thing was the matter with her child?

“ Oh no, ma’am,” returned Mary, “ nothing at all is the matter with the sweet babe, so don’t you be frightened, ma’am; but indeed *hur* has been sadly scared *hur*-self. You must know, ma’am, that *hur* was walking at the bottom of that mountain which you liked so, and where you said the air was so good for Miss Rosa, and as *hur* did not see any cattle about, *hur* thought *hur* would go up a little way, when all of a sudden a nasty black bull came prancing down quite furious, and seeing me, began to toss about, and was

making quite fast to us; so, ma'am, as hur could not get away, hur screamed so loudly, that a gentleman, who was, at a little distance, heard hur, and seeing our danger, he darted between us and the bull, and opening an umbrella, which he had in his hand, right in the face of the animal, it was so frightened, that it instantly turned the other way; you may be sure, ma'am, hur did not stay to look at it; so as well as *hur* trembling limbs would let, hur run down the mountain again; but thinking hur ought to thank the gentleman, and seeing all was now safe, hur waited till he came in sight——"

"Gracious Heaven," interrupted Rosa, "to what danger has my child been exposed! I hope you thanked the generous stranger for his goodness? But for his courage, your lives might have been sacrificed."

"Oh yes, ma'am, hur said every thing to him that hur fright would let; and he was the sweetest-spoken gentleman that ever hur saw, and took such notice of the

dear baby, who smiled on him as if she knew what he had just done for her, and put out her little arms to go to him; I assure you, ma'am, he seemed quite affected, and taking her from me, he held her while I recovered a little from my fright. 'Sweet innocent,' said he, 'thou art unconscious of danger; happy age, when nought can disturb thy tranquillity; oh, who would wish to attain the years of man, to be susceptible to woes and sorrow, which the peaceful days of infancy can never know!' Oh, ma'am, if you had but have heard how fine he said this grand speech, you would never have forgotten it. Her could not answer it, so her kept silent, until he asked whose child it was, and what was its name; so her told him that it was Mrs. Seymour's, a widow lady, and that its name was Charlotte Rosa; and then, ma'am, he again muttered some fine speech about its being fatherless, and kissing it, sighed so deeply, that her thought his heart would break, and indeed her could not help sighing too."

Rosa could scarcely refrain from smiling at the simplicity of the girl; but feeling a strong sense of gratitude towards a person who had rendered her such an essential service, as that of protecting her child from danger, she desired Mary, if ever she saw him again, to say how greatly she was indebted to him for his kindness.

Mary replied that it was most likely she should see him again, as he had inquired if she often walked that way, for that he was so pleased with the beauty of the child, that he should like to see it again.

"Well," returned Rosa, "every attention and civility on your part is certainly his due, for the very great service he has rendered both you and my child; but be cautious, Mary, how you encourage any interviews with a stranger, which might perhaps end in trouble to yourself; it is my wish now, for all reasons, that you would avoid that way as much as possible in future."

With this salutary advice her mistress dismissed her, and shortly after Rosa heard the carriage of lady Charlotte draw up to the door, out of which her ladyship descended, and alone. The preceding scene of the morning, to which she had been witness, again rushed upon her mind, and greatly perplexed her; she viewed the beautiful face of her ladyship, who, as she descended from her carriage, smiled sweetly around, apparently in conscious innocence and integrity; and Rosa could not help mentally exclaiming, in the words of the poet—"Who could think that falsehood lurked beneath so fair a countenance!"

CHAPTER IV.

Rosa did not see any more of her ladyship until they met at the dinner-table, when, as they dined *en famille*, she was giving Mr. Montague an account of her morning visits—"I have made a new acquaintance," said she with a smile, "with whom I am very much pleased, and who has promised me the honour of paying me a visit."

Rosa looked rather suspiciously, as Mr. Montague inquired to whom her ladyship alluded?

"To no less a personage," she replied with a smile, "than lady Editha Llewellyn, one of the greatest dowagers of this place, who prides herself upon her high descent and long Welsh pedigree; in short, she is what is called a very proud woman, but, in my opinion, a very charming one."

I met with her," added her ladyship, "at the house of Mrs. C——, where a mutual introduction was given; and from the character I had previously heard of her, I expected to have been chilled into awe at her hauteur; so far from this, however, I was delighted with her lady-like deportment and affable manners: and am convinced the report of her pride is an error, or at least only arises from a consciousness of high birth, and a degree of superiority which she certainly does possess over many of her sex, being a sensible and well-informed woman, and able to converse on any subject."

... "I have heard of her ladyship," said Mr. Montague; "has she not a son?"

The eyes of Rosa instantly fixed on lady Charlotte.—"Now," thought she, "perhaps I may discover some clue to the scene of the morning."

Her ladyship's countenance underwent no change whatever; and with an unembarrassed manner she immediately replied—"Yes; she informed me she had, sir

Owen Llewellyn, who succeeded to that title on the decease of his father. I am told he is a very fine young man, and the pride of his mother's heart. She has promised to pay me a visit, and I suppose will introduce her son to you."

"I shall be happy to receive him," replied Mr. Montague; "I have not the pleasure of knowing him."

Rosa felt a degree of emotion steal over her during this conversation; she could not but suspect but that this sir Owen was the gentleman with whom she had seen her ladyship in the morning; and this idea was certainly not a very favourable one to her ladyship, whom she now considered as acting with such double duplicity towards a man who was reposing so much trust and confidence in her love and integrity: from the unbounded kindness with which she had been treated by lady Charlotte, she wished, if possible, not to judge too severely of her conduct, but she could not obliterate from her mind the scene to which she had been witness, and she now

waited, in the idea of seeing sir Owen, when she should at least ascertain whether he was the person or not with whom her ladyship was on such familiar terms.

As soon as the servants were withdrawn after dinner, lady Charlotte drew forth a letter—"I have news for you," said she, addressing Rosa; "I have received a letter this morning from our friend Emily Harrison; and I think, by its contents, we may venture to pronounce that she is in the road to happiness; her delicacy and timidity will not allow her to speak quite openly on the subject; but if I judge aright, your old admirer, Charles Horace, is fast forgetting his attachment to *your ladyship*, in the society of this dear girl, who, I know, has the most sincere regard for him."

"Heaven grant it may be so!" fervently ejaculated Rosa; "most sincerely do I pray that every happiness may be theirs."

Lady Charlotte drew a just conclusion of the state of Emily Harrison's mind; she was indeed much happier than when

her friends had left her: Mr. Horace, restored to the good opinion of Mrs. Harrison, was again on the most friendly terms; and the opportunities he had of passing his time with her fair daughter, gradually endeared her to him; the most delicate attentions were paid to him by her, and without overstepping the bounds of modesty, she became the dearest object of his heart. At first he used to converse with her on the subject of the unhappy Rosa, who, though lost to him, still he acknowledged as dear to his heart; but at the same time he endeavoured to banish every sentiment which he considered as now highly improper, knowing her to be another's. Emily listened to all his griefs with patience and sweetness; she gave him pity for his sorrows, and dropped the tear of compassion over the fate of the miserable Rosa.

"Amiable sympathiser!" Mr. Horace would exclaim, "how few there are who can thus weep for the misfortunes of others! blighted as are my own prospects

on earth, it affords me the highest relief, to have thus a *female friend*, who generously shares in my woes; never, Emily, shall I forget your kind and soothing conduct; it affords the only balm this aching heart can know."

Such was the language of Mr. Horace for the first few months after the departure of Rosa, and Emily soon amended in her health; she had no idea of his ever assuming a more tender strain than that of friendship, and with that she was contented; nor did our young clergyman suspect that he was again training his heart to love, until a circumstance occurred which awakened his feelings most acutely.

The establishment of Mrs. Harrison had undergone some changes: of her former boarders, Miss Dashley, Mr. Lorimer, and Mr. Horace, were all that remained, consequently she wished for an augmentation to her family circle, and succeeded in gaining two elderly ladies, of high respectability; for Mrs. Harrison was resolved now to be more cautious than ever as to whom

she admitted, and took care to have every satisfaction previous to their entrance into her house.

One of these ladies had a nephew, who paid her occasional visits. Sir Philip Horton, though a plain young man, possessed some brilliant talents, and in the possession of a moderate fortune, to many young ladies his hand would have been an unexceptionable offer. The fair Emily soon became an object of attraction to him, and his visits were now long and frequent, and the plea of coming to see his aunt gave him a sufficient excuse. His attentions, however, soon became pointedly marked towards Emily, to her great regret, and to the displeasure of Mr. Horace, who began to find that he could no longer engross Emily to himself for whole evenings together, as he had hitherto done, in conversation or music; for if she played and sang, sir Philip was watching over her with rapture, or taking a part in their conversation, to the great annoyance of Mr. Horace, who could not of course converse

on his favourite theme before a third person; at first he imagined himself only vexed at his intrusion; but at length he began to find, that the attentions paid by sir Philip to Emily caused him uneasiness, and the idea of her becoming his filled him with alarm.

This conviction caused him to examine seriously into the state of his heart; and the result proved that he was more interested for the fate of Emily than he was aware, and rendered him uneasy in the idea, that if he endeavoured or wished to prevent an union between sir Philip and her, he must of course assign a reason on his part, as his bosom was too much the seat of honour to trifle with the feelings of any woman, much more such a female as Emily, for whom he entertained the sincerest regard, although till that moment he had not suspected it was a tender passion which he cherished. She was indeed the only female who seemed worthy to supply the place of Rosa; and after some

mature deliberation he resolved to think of her alone.

He had now to find out whether the attentions of sir Philip were agreeable to Emily, and he again suffered all the torments of jealousy, until he could ascertain the truth; his mind became abstracted, and Emily beheld with concern the dejection which stole over him, little guessing that she was the cause.

Many opportunities did he now seek to open his heart to her, but could not gain a favourable one, generally from the close attendance of sir Philip, until at length, one evening, entering the drawing-room, he beheld her alone, the rest of the ladies being out, and Mrs. Harrison engaged in her own room writing letters.

Mr. Horace advanced, and taking her hand, exclaimed—"How happy am I, my dear Emily, in thus finding you alone!—it is a happiness I have not enjoyed for some time."

Emily looked surprised at the unusual warmth of his manner, and remained silent.

"Perhaps," resumed he, "I am hailing a circumstance which is far from being a source of pleasure to you; I allude to the absence of sir Philip, who has of late deprived me of the greatest happiness of my life, that of enjoying your society unrestrained."

Emily looked confused.—"Indeed, sir," she replied, "the absence of sir Philip cannot affect me—nor do I understand why you should thus allude to him, since neither his absence or his presence can in any way concern me."

Mr. Horace looked pleased.—"I believe you too candid and sincere, Emily," he cried, "to utter any other than the dictates of your heart; may I then venture, without offending your delicacy, to ask whether the addresses of sir Philip are agreeable to your gentle bosom?"

"Certainly not," said Emily, in great agitation; "I never can receive them—I have the most weighty reasons for rejecting them; I——"

She paused, and appeared greatly embarrassed.

“May I not know those reasons?” cried Mr. Horace, gazing tenderly in her face; “is there any other happier being than sir Philip, who has obtained an interest in your heart? Oh, Emily! speak, and ease my fears.”

Poor Emily looked the picture of confusion,—“Wherefore these questions, sir?” she stammered out; “and why are you thus interested in the fate of sir Philip to plead for him?”

“*I plead for him!*” interrupted Mr. Horace. “You mistake me, Emily—it is my own cause I would plead; I would lay open my whole heart to your view, and show you how dear you are to me! Oh, may I hope that I am not indifferent to you—say that you will be mine, and ease my fears.”

The agitation of Emily may be easily conceived at this unexpected declaration: she could not speak, her cheeks were suf-

fused with blushes, as she averted her face from the ardent gaze of her lover.

“What am I to think of this silence?” he exclaimed; “do you reject my suit? am I disagreeable in your eyes?”

“*Disagreeable!*” reiterated Emily. “Oh, if you knew——”

She paused, fearful of saying too much; but her looks expressed enough, and Mr. Horace read the feelings of her heart.—“*I do know, my Emily,*” he cried, in a voice of tenderness; “a thousand recollections rush upon my mind, to convince me that I have long been blind to my own happiness, and I now thank sir Philip for having awakened my slumbering passions, and taught me this heart can again love.”

With manly fervour he continued to press his suit; and at length obtained an acknowledgment from her lips that he was not indifferent to her, provided it met with her mother's sanction, without which this amiable girl would not consent to act; and Mr. Horace promised to take an early

opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Harrison on the subject, whose consent he did not despair of obtaining.

In this state were affairs at the time of Emily's letter reaching the hands of lady Charlotte; and though she had not related the whole of the above scene, yet she had said enough to convince her ladyship that she was happy in the affections of Mr. Horace. She added, that Miss Dashley was in some uneasiness respecting her guardian, as they had not yet heard any tidings of him. She then concluded her letter with every kind remembrance to Rosa, and prayers for her happiness.

The name of lord Darlington could never be mentioned without causing the greatest agitation in the bosom of our heroine; lady Charlotte therefore did not dwell upon the subject; and shortly after the ladies retired from the dinner-table.

did indeed immediately recognise him, not as the object of her suspicions with respect to lady Charlotte, but as the gentleman whom they had met some time previous in their rambles, and who had alarmed them by the report of his gun.

Sir Owen evinced his surprise, as he instantly recollected the ladies, and in the most gallant terms expressed his happiness at this accidental but fortunate meeting. Lady Editha in some astonishment begged for an explanation, which was given to her; and with a good-humoured smile she acknowledged the singularity of the circumstance: the ceremony of introduction over, all parties became at ease, and Rosa found, as lady Charlotte had stated, that lady Editha was a woman of exalted understanding and conversation. She appeared much pleased with our interesting Rosa; and being informed she was a *widow*, sympathized with her on her misfortune.—“I,” said lady Editha, “have experienced that trial; I lost an affectionate husband in the meridian of

to which she had been witness; but her tongue faltered as she endeavoured to introduce a subject of so delicate a nature, and the sentence died away unuttered: her conjectures on one head were, however, very soon relieved; for one morning as they were sitting at work in the drawing-room, the servant announced the names of lady Editha and sir Owen Llewellyn.

Rosa, as was her usual custom whenever any visitors came, immediately arose to leave the room; but lady Charlotte begged her to stay and see lady Editha; and an inward something prompted her to behold sir Owen, as she should then ascertain whether he was the gentleman with whom she had seen lady Charlotte. She therefore complied, and in a few minutes beheld a lady of elegant deportment enter the room: her figure was fine and majestic, and evinced true nobility. She was followed by a gentleman, whom she introduced to lady Charlotte as her son. Rosa looked on him with surprise; she

did indeed immediately recognise him, not as the object of her suspicions with respect to lady Charlotte, but as the gentleman whom they had met some time previous in their rambles, and who had alarmed them by the report of his gun.

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life, whose memory will ever be cherished by me: Heaven had however bestowed years of happiness on our heads, and knowing that felicity on earth is but fleeting, I submitted to its wise decrees with fortitude and resignation. I bowed my head with gratitude for the past, and acknowledged that I had been blessed beyond many others; and doubly ought I to feel this truth when I look at *you*, dear madam, thus early deprived of a beloved partner. So young, so lovely, to look at you, we should scarcely suppose you had entered the sacred bonds of matrimony, much less sustained so severe a blow."

Rosa averted her head; her countenance betrayed symptoms of agony. Lady Charlotte, feeling for her embarrassment, kindly relieved her, by saying, that the subject was too painful for her to converse on.

"I beg pardon," replied lady Editha; "I would not wound the afflicted for worlds; I would if possible pour the balm of consolation in her bosom, and sooth her

sorrows.—If you will accept my friendship," added her ladyship, taking the hand of our heroine, "I will to the utmost exert it, to chase away your griefs and share your sorrows."

"Words are wanting," replied Rosa, "to express my sense of your ladyship's condescension; I feel the weight of your kindness, and although the 'child of sorrow,' I must with gratitude acknowledge that the hand of friendship has been fully held out to me; but for *that*, I must ere now have sunk beneath the pressure of affliction. Yes!" she continued, with emotion, while her soft eyes glowed with energy, "when almost bowed down with grief, and life seemed as a passing shadow ready to flit away, *that* inestimable boon was bestowed; it descended from heaven like a celestial vision, in the form of lady Charlotte Montague; it was she who bade me live, and by soothing my sorrows, and affording me her inestimable friendship, reconciled me to life." At that moment, while thinking on the goodness of lady

Charlotte, Rosa had forgotten her late suspicions; and in portraying the amiable qualities of her friend, her heart dictated what her lips now uttered. The natural grace which accompanied all her actions, added to the fascination of her manners, rendered her an object of admiration; the subject upon which she was conversing gave an additional glow to her cheeks; her eyes were surcharged with tears, and had a limner wanted a subject for his pencil, the beauteous form of Rosa would have graced the highest skill. Lady Editha warmly pressed the hand she yet retained; sir Owen gazed on her with evident marks of admiration; while lady Charlotte, somewhat embarrassed by the compliment of our heroine, replied—"My dearest Rosa, you far overrate the trifling assistance I have bestowed; your sorrows and your own merits entitle you to every attention, and I trust the friendship which subsists between us will never subside but with life."

"Your hearts appear congenial," said

lady Editha, "and may no rude thorns spring up to wither the sacred bonds of friendship which link you together! but indeed, lady Charlotte," added her ladyship, assuming a gayer tone, "you must not think to monopolize your charming friend entirely to yourself; I must insist on enjoying some portion of her society, and I trust that I shall have the pleasure of receiving a visit very shortly from both."

The ladies bowed; while sir Owen, addressing Rosa, exclaimed—"I remember, madam, when I had the honour of meeting with you in your rambles, that you expressed yourself a lover of nature, and were pleased with the charming scenes before you; if therefore you will honour us with your company, you will find that Llewellyn Castle abounds in beautiful views, and commands the most lovely prospects that nature can present, and which I am convinced would suit your taste and disposition."

Rosa bowed her thanks; and Mr. Montague entering at that moment, put a stop

to the conversation. Lady Charlotte presented him to her new friends, and after the ceremony of introduction, general subjects became the theme. All parties appeared mutually pleased with each other, and invitations were given on each side.

Lady Editha evinced a general knowledge of the world; she could converse with ease and elegance upon any subject, while her sentiments were refined and exalted; and Rosa thought, next to lady Charlotte, she was the most charming woman she had ever seen. In pleasing conversation the morning wore fast away, until lady Editha reminding her son that they had other visits to pay, ordered her carriage, and took a reluctant leave. Sir Owen's adieus were friendly to all; but there was an expression of tenderness in his countenance on parting with Rosa, that rather embarrassed her, but so respectful withal, that it was impossible to be offended; but conscious of her own peculiar situation, she was apprehensive of forming dangerous friendships, and she re-

solved to be on her guard. Lady Editha warmly pressed her hand on parting, and again begged she would honour Llewellyn Castle with her presence very shortly; she then, with her son, quitted the room, and entering her carriage, was soon driven out of sight.

Mr. Montague expressed himself as much pleased with their new friends as his lady had been, and resolved to cultivate the friendship of sir Owen, who appeared to be a most pleasing and amiable young man.

The doubts and suspicions of Rosa respecting him were now removed, and her thoughts again naturally reverted to the gentleman with whom she had seen lady Charlotte; but so great was her reliance on the honour of that lady, that after the first impressions of indignation subsided within her bosom, she began to persuade herself that she must have been mistaken; so true it is, that that which we wish not to believe, we are anxious to dissuade ourselves from thinking, until the idea be-

comes fainter and fainter within our breasts. Thus it was with Rosa; and although so firmly convinced that it was the actual form of lady Charlotte which she beheld, still she endeavoured to banish the remembrance, or at least wait with patience until time should unravel the mystery, for so exalted was the virtue of her benefactress, that the breath of calumny had not dared to waft its insidious gale upon her; she was, to use the words of our favourite bard,

“ So good a lady, that no tongue dare yet
Pronounce dishonour of her.”

CHAPTER VI.

ALTHOUGH our heroine was now passing her time in peaceful security, yet the blessing of happiness refused to shed its joys within her heart; so many concealments preyed upon her mind, her soul was surcharged with the weight of so many mysterious circumstances of which she was in possession, and not the least of these were the mysteries attending the ruined abbey; she had cautiously avoided visiting a spot so replete with terrors; but it disturbed her repose, and haunted her imagination; she could not divest herself of the idea that it was connected with herself; her own name so mysteriously written, with the broken but dreadful sentences, brought "proof strong as holy writ," and she shuddered with horror at the dreadful images

which presented themselves to her imagination.

Lady Charlotte did all in her power to dissipate the depression of spirits under which she too plainly perceived she laboured, and kindly insisted on her accompanying her in some of her visits: much against her inclination, Rosa was forced to comply; she could not refuse so trifling a request to a friend who had done so much for her, and whose real motive she knew was that of tenderness and regard for her welfare. One visit she would fain have been excused paying; but lady Charlotte, from the best of reasons, insisted on her going with her to Llewellyn Castle; lady Editha, she said, would be offended if Rosa persisted in her refusal, and the friendship of so noble and exalted a lady was not to be treated with indifference or disrespect. Rosa acknowledged the truth of this, and therefore, with a palpitating heart, she accompanied lady Charlotte to the abode of lady Editha.

Llewellyn Castle was one of those noble

and Gothic buildings which still retain the grandeur of ancient days; standing on a gentle eminence, it commanded a view of the lovely Vale of Clwyd, while the different rivers were seen gliding and winding in calm and tranquil motion, until they were suddenly lost in the vast expanse of sea which closed the prospect; while the "hills and the dales" rose in majestic succession, and appeared to reach the over-hanging heavens: the interior of the castle presented a display no ways inferior to what its exterior promised. Lady Charlotte and Rosa entered a large and stately hall, around which hung many a banner and triumphal implement of war, the hard-earned laurels of the ancestors of Llewellyn; the flags of the victorious Saxons, with their mottoes, were yet in good repair, and not a little valued by their present possessors: from this hall the ladies were conducted up a large staircase, which terminated in a gallery, containing a suit of apartments; the door of one being thrown open, the servant announced the ladies.

Lady Editha received them with that easy and friendly dignity which so characterized her, and welcomed them to her house with unfeigned pleasure and sincerity. She instantly sent a servant to apprize sir Owen of the visitors; he was walking, her ladyship added, in their own grounds; and would, she knew, be much displeased if she suffered them to depart without his seeing them.

He was not long in obeying their summons, and in a very short time he entered the drawing-room; his eyes beamed with joy and animation as he took the trembling and somewhat reluctant hand of our heroine, who felt an agitation steal over her frame in the presence of this young man, for which she could scarcely account; yet so respectful was his manners, that it was impossible to feel offended; but it was too obvious, even at this early period, the pleasure he took in the society of our heroine, who, tremblingly alive to every softer sensation of the heart, observed it with pain and regret, and forced her to

assume a far greater reserve of manners than she would have done to one so worthy of her friendship.

Their visit was protracted beyond the formal one of a mere morning call; and lady Editha insisted on their naming an early day to dine with them, of course with the addition of Mr. Montague. Rosa pleaded her wish for retirement, as an excuse for not accompanying her friends, as her spirits were not equal to mixing with company, and that scenes of gaiety were not congenial to her sorrowing heart.

Lady Editha replied, that all strangers should be excluded, and that, in the lieu of gaiety, she would substitute the solid gem of cheerful friendship, and by experience she well knew that in the calm delights of sincere friends, the only antidote to grief could be found—"And since," added her ladyship, "the all-wise dispensations of Providence have placed you in this trying situation, no doubt for your ultimate good, although we short-

sighted mortals cannot see a good in what we term our afflictions, yet you must remember you are also a mother, and have, for the sake of your child, other duties to perform, and therefore must not give yourself up to unavailing despair; and I am confident, my dear Mrs. Seymour, that your own bosom will acknowledge the truth of these remarks. I do not speak the theory which I cannot practise—I *have* overcome even the pangs of death; and in the blessed and glorious comfort of religion, I have learnt patiently to bear the trials which await us in this transitory existence."

Rosa expressed her thanks to her noble friend, whose eyes beamed with all the purity and meekness of true religion; but, alas! she knew not the peculiar situation of our heroine; had she indeed have seen the last remains of a beloved husband, and known that the earth had for ever enclosed his form from her view, then would she have bowed her head with resignation; but as it was in the most dreadful uncertainty, and a victim to perfidy, her sor-

rows almost encompassed her, and in tears only could she reply to lady Editha, who now, with the most pleasing vivacity, gave a change to the conversation, which continued lively and interesting until they arose to take their leave; sir Owen handed them to their carriage, and in a most expressive manner breathed forth his adieus to Rosa.

During their drive home lady Charlotte warmly expressed her admiration of her new acquaintance. Rosa could not but acknowledge their worth, but she was evidently thoughtful; and her ladyship, who was a close observer of human nature, pretty well guessed the real feelings of Rosa; she saw that sir Owen evidently admired her, and that passing, as she did, for a *widow*, he of course was justifiable in addressing her; and her ladyship almost wished that she was at liberty to receive his addresses, as she thought they were well calculated to render each other happy. These ideas were, however, merely chimerical; and she carefully avoided men-

tioning such a subject to our heroine, to whom she well knew it would cause great pain; and on arriving at Rosewood the ladies soon separated to dress for dinner.

Rosa devoted as much time as possible to her darling child; she beheld with real delight the first dawnings of reason stealing fast over its infant mind; it was now able to return the caresses of its unhappy mother, who sometimes lost for a while the sense of her real miseries while pressing it to her heart; as its lovely features began to form, it exhibited a strong resemblance to its beauteous mother—the soft blue eyes already beamed with that ineffable sweetness which so truly marked our heroine, and no one could look without light on such an “an angel-mother and her cherub child.”

Lady Charlotte was also dotingly fond of her little goddaughter, and frequently passed an hour in the nursery, and evinced such a true regard for both mother and child, that Rosa felt more and more gratitude daily arise to the generous hand.

that had thus placed her above the reach of want: how doubly painful was it then to cherish feelings in her bosom so truly repugnant to the honour of lady Charlotte! sometimes, when overpressed with the weight of concealment, she would resolve to speak on the subject to her, but her tongue faltered ere the sentence could be given utterance; it was such a delicate investigation for her to make, that she could not summon sufficient courage to attempt it; the conduct of lady Charlotte was so truly correct—she appeared so devoted to her husband, that it was impossible she could cherish a sentiment of regard for any other. It was an impenetrable mystery; but Rosa recollected she had been twice deceived before in supposing she had beheld lady Charlotte; and after much deliberation in her own mind, she actually resolved to mention the subject to lady Charlotte, the first opportunity which offered itself.

This, she flattered herself, was soon afforded her, as one day after dinner, Mr.

Montague, having an engagement with some gentlemen, arose from table early; the weather was particularly lovely, but so warm, that lady Charlotte had kept within doors, to avoid the scorching heat of the sun; the cool refreshing breezes of the evening, however, tempted her to enjoy its sweets, and she invited Rosa to accompany her in a ramble through the vale. Our heroine instantly complied—it was the opportunity for which she wished, when, unobserved by all, she could reveal the fatal secret which rankled in her bosom.

Lady Charlotte took the arm of Rosa, and, unattended, they commenced their walk. Her ladyship, as usual, began a conversation of a lively nature, expatiating on the beauties of the scene, and admiring, almost with enthusiasm, the delightful prospects around. — “This, my dear Rosa,” said her ladyship, “is what I anticipated when I invited you to accompany me in my retirement, where, free from the noise and confusion of the busy metropolis, we might enjoy each others

society with purity and peace; and could I but see you more happy," added her ladyship, looking affectionately in the face of her companion, "I should be truly so myself; but it is with pain I observe that your sorrows rankle at your heart, and that 'Melancholy marks you for her own."

"Your ladyship's goodness," replied the agitated Rosa, "is boundless, and I fear you must think me wanting in gratitude, by suffering my spirits to be depressed in your charming society; but, my beloved friend, knowing, as you do, the peculiar situation in which I am placed, you will, I am convinced, make every allowance for me; nor will you wonder at the uneasiness of mind under which I labour, added to which, the *many, many concealments* which oppress me, and almost deprive me of reason,"

Rosa trembled as she spoke—this was the moment for which she had long wished, and she now resolved, if possible, to introduce the painful subject.

Lady Charlotte saw that she was more

than usually agitated — “ I do feel and participate in your woes, my dear Rosa,” she replied ; “ but I should hope that you have no additional cause for grief—no fresh ‘ concealments,’ as Shakespeare beautifully expresses it, *MS. A. 1. 2. 1270 317 4*

‘ Like a worm i’ the bud,
Feeding on your damask cheek ;’

say, is there yet a sorrow unrevealed ? if so, let the bosom of friendship receive it : oh ! give me all your griefs, and let me soften their poignancy, if I cannot relieve them.”

The heart of Rosa beat with emotion—it was an appeal not to be resisted, and she endeavoured to frame an answer, but ere her trembling lips could pronounce it, a faint exclamation escaped lady Charlotte — “ What sudden flash was that ? ” said she — “ sure it was lightning ! ”

Rosa confirmed her in her opinion, and looking towards the sky, beheld the atmosphere was totally changed ; large black clouds usurped the place of those so lately tinged with “ streaks of flaming gold,”

and threatened an immediate storm, while the rain began to descend in torrents.

The ladies were alarmed, for in close conversation, they had not beheld the change until it now burst upon them; no shelter was near, as they had chose the most remote part of the vale; and so deeply intent had Rosa been on the subject on which she had wished to have conversed, that she had not observed that they had unconsciously taken the path which led to Ruthvale Abbey. All the horrors of that place rushed to her imagination; she dared not to reveal her fears to her companion, who stood pale and almost motionless with terror, as a heavy peal of thunder rolled over their heads.—“Oh, what will become of us?” said lady Charlotte; “whither shall we fly for shelter? Never, from a child, could I witness thunder unappalled; and though I have endeavoured to conquer my fears, yet this weakness still pervades my bosom.”

Again the lightning shot across their

eyes; lady Charlotte shrieked with terror. Rosa exerted her fortitude to support her friend; but to seek some shelter was now absolutely necessary, as their garments were drenched with rain.—“Let us hasten to the abbey,” cried her ladyship; “we may perhaps gain a temporary shelter beneath the ruins.”

“It is so dismal a place,” replied Rosa, in a voice of hesitation; “does not your ladyship remember how terrified you were at the ruinous tower?”

“All terrors but the present are obliterated from my mind,” returned lady Charlotte: “I cannot look on this awful crash of nature. We will not attempt the tower, but merely seek shelter among the ruins on the outside. Quick, dear Rosa, let us hasten; and pity this terror which I cannot conquer.”

In a state of mind better to be imagined than described, Rosa followed the steps of lady Charlotte, and in a few minutes she beheld those fatal ruins, which she had, since her last alarm, so cautiously avoided.

The storm raged with increasing violence, and lady Charlotte, almost flying, darted through an arched door, which stood partly open, and Rosa, with a palpitating heart, beheld they were in the dismal and spacious hall, where she had, on a former occasion, suffered so much alarm by the appearance of the mysterious figure.

CHAPTER VII.

UNCONSCIOUS of the terror which dwelt within the bosom of Rosa, lady Charlotte congratulated herself upon having found shelter from the storm.—“I shall henceforth,” said she, “look upon this place with more complacency than I have hitherto done, since it affords me protection in the hour of need.”

Rosa made no reply, as another heavy

peal of thunder shook the place, and threatened destruction to all around.

Lady Charlotte was again alarmed.—
“Merciful Heaven!” she exclaimed,
“what a dreadful storm! I fear we are
hardly right in venturing in this place.
We may be crushed with these moulder-
ing ruins, for such another peal will cer-
tainly shake them to the earth.”

“Indeed,” replied Rosa, “it is not safe
or prudent to remain here; we are endan-
gering our lives, therefore let us brave
the storm without, and trust to an all-
merciful Providence to guide us in safety
to some more habitable spot.”

Lady Charlotte acquiesced, and Rosa,
taking her trembling hand, was about to
lead her from the place, when a vivid
flash of lightning gleamed across her eyes.
The heavens seemed to open, and emit the
forked flame, and all nature appeared to
undergo a convulsive shock. Lady Char-
lotte sunk on some broken steps which
were near, and seemed almost fainting;

while the distress of Rosa may be imagined: she seated herself by the side of her nearly insensible friend, and supported her head on her bosom, who hid her face in speechless agony.

Rosa remained for a few minutes almost motionless; her eyes wandered around the dismal hall; until they fixed on that spot where she had before seen the gigantic figure; but what were her sensations, when, in the deep obscurity, she again beheld a moving form! At first she thought it might be the effect of her imagination, while reflecting on her former alarm; but she was soon convinced of its reality, by the figure waving its hand with solemn and impressive motion. Rosa was nearly wound to a pitch of frenzy; her friend laying almost insensible in her arms, she feared to agitate her farther by any expression of alarm; she therefore remained in silence, with her eyes fixed on the object of her terror; but in the next moment it had vanished, and nought could she see but the dismal space in

which it had appeared to stand; instantly the soft and solemn strains of music which she had before heard issued from the spot in which the spectre had disappeared. This aroused lady Charlotte, who, looking up, exclaimed—"From whence do those sounds proceed?"

Rosa pointed in speechless agony to the fatal spot; her lips refused to give utterance to what she beheld; while her ladyship, now gazing on her face, saw the anguish of her mind.—"You are alarmed, my dear Rosa," she cried. "Good Heaven! what has thus distressed you? Has my foolish fears operated thus upon your spirits? If so, I can scarcely forgive myself."

"Oh, no, no," faltered out our heroine, "it is not you. Do you not hear those strains? They proceed from no mortal hand."

"What mean you, Rosa?" exclaimed lady Charlotte, with a countenance of terror; "they are solemn and impressive in-

deed ; but do not suffer idle superstition to sway your mind. See," added her ladyship, and her countenance brightened as she spoke, " the storm is abated, and I feel new courage animate my bosom ; therefore look up, Rosa, and tell me why you are thus alarmed ?"

With an agitated voice Rosa acknowledged the sight of the figure which had thus terrified her.

Lady Charlotte trembled with alarm, but struggling with her own feelings, she essayed to rally the spirits of her drooping companion.—" Be not alarmed, dear Rosa," she cried ; " it is evidently some one who, like ourselves, has taken shelter from the storm, and perhaps thinks to amuse himself by raising our fears ; but we will shew him we are not thus easily to be alarmed. Hark ! again the sounds are issuing, and the musician cannot be far distant. We will examine that spot where you saw the figure, and no doubt our fears will be removed by the appearance of a human form."

Rosa followed her ladyship in silence, who proceeded down the hall, though not without some degree of agitation, which she endeavoured to conceal from her companion. At that instant the sun broke through the clouds, and darted its radiant beams through the Gothic windows ; this enlivened the scene, and gave a degree of courage to the trembling pair.

Rosa had never ventured to explore this end of the hall before, and as they advanced to the spot where the figure had so mysteriously disappeared, her heart beat with violent agitation, particularly on observing a sort of monument erected against the wall, with the figure of death carved upon it ; in his hand he held his fatal dart, which he seemed preparing to level, and his *tout ensemble* was calculated to inspire horror.

“ What a dismal place ! ” said lady Charlotte ; “ it is enough to inspire one with superstition, and make us fancy that we really behold moving images ; for you see, my dear Rosa, it must have been

your *fancy* only, since here is no place in which a human being could have concealed himself."

As she spoke, the soft strains of the music again broke upon their ear, and appeared to issue from the tomb.

"Hark!" said Rosa; "is that fancy? Oh, shield me, Heaven, from this place of horror!"

"It is very strange," said lady Charlotte, who was now greatly alarmed; but how was that agitation increased, when she beheld the arrow in the hand of death shake with a gentle motion! Hardly daring to believe the evidence of her own senses, she was turning to Rosa, but a shriek bursting at that instant from her lips, convinced her ladyship that she had also seen the horrible phenomenon. Each gazed at the other in speechless agony; their looks alone expressed their feelings; could they have given words utterance, they might have exclaimed with Shakespeare—

Art thou any thing?

Art thou some god—some angel—or some devil?

Thou makest my blood run cold, and my hair to stand!

Speak to me! What art thou?

The simultaneous impulse of both was, however, to take flight, and they instantly darted down the hall with all the rapidity which their trembling limbs would permit; nor did they stop until they found themselves once more in the open country.

“Thank Heaven,” exclaimed lady Charlotte, “that we are safe out of this dreadful place! never did I experience such terror. Oh, Rosa, what are we to think? Sure we could not both be deceived as to the cause of our alarm.”

“Oh no,” replied Rosa, “too plainly did I behold the fatal dart—it levelled its shaft at me; too well I know that death has dealt his blow, and the spirit of my murdered husband hovers near the dreadful spot.”

The wildness of her manner alarmed lady Charlotte, who knew not the former cause she had had of terror in these mys-

terious ruins; and though greatly agitated herself, she endeavoured to rally the spirits of her drooping companion. —“ We can all be very brave,” said her ladyship, “ when we are out of the reach of danger; and now that I freely breathe the air, and see nought around but the beautiful works of nature, I feel ashamed of my former fears, and reason now points out, that it must have been some one concealed, and taking advantage of our weakness, entertained himself at our expence, and is no doubt now laughing heartily at our foolish fears.”

Rosa essayed to smile; she thought it would be cruel in her to reveal what she had before seen and heard, as lady Charlotte might probably banish from her mind the superstitious ideas which had so lately possessed her, but which sunk too deeply in the mind of Rosa.

“ I fear you are ill,” cried her ladyship, as she viewed her pallid cheek; “ this has been a night of horror; we will endeavour to proceed home as fast as possible,

and change our garments, for we are wet through."

The storm had now subsided, and a perfect calm succeeded; the leaves seemed refreshed with the rain which had fallen, and the setting sun darted its beams on the rainbow which now encircled the heavens with splendid colours.

"Blessed harbinger," cried lady Charlotte, as she viewed the brilliant scene, "blessed harbinger, I always behold *thee* with sensations of gratitude and delight—it is the promise of the Almighty hand for the safety of his creatures! Oh, who shall dare to doubt that Power, when thus they behold the wonders of his hand! already I feel a calmness pervade my mind; true religion can inspire us with courage and fortitude. Look up, dear Rosa, to those resplendent heavens, and receive the precious boon within your bosom which devotion gives."

"Insensible must that bosom be," replied our heroine, "who does not feel the

heavenly emanation. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God,’ says the Psalmist; ‘and the firmament sheweth his handiwork,’ which is indeed at this moment particularly resplendent; and I perfectly participate in your ladyship’s feelings, in acknowledging the pure delights which we experience in true devotion—it is the beacon to which the mourner looks with comfort and hope—it can banish black despair from the troubled mind, and sooth the distraction of the soul. Doctor Blair has beautifully described the pleasures which arise from the habitual practice of piety—‘To thee, oh, devotion,’ says he, ‘we owe the highest improvements of our nature; from thee we derive the only solid enjoyment—thou art our support when assailed by misfortune, and the rock which enables us to withstand temptation—thou calmest the passions, exaltest the feelings, and thy communications are alike imparted to the lofty and the humble; for thou breakest down the barriers of distinction, and placest the prince upon a level with

the peasant; thy sanctuary is ever open to the afflicted, and inaccessible only to the impure and the impious."

"I perfectly remember that passage," replied lady Charlotte; "the language is indeed beautiful, and by your correct repetition of it, evinces that your mind is well stored with religious subjects, which support you through the various trials which you have to undergo."

Rosa was prevented making any further reply, by the appearance of some of the servants from Rosewood, who, knowing their mistress was out, and unattended, had provided themselves with large cloaks, &c. and had set out, in the hope of sheltering them from the storm; for so well beloved by the domestics was both lady Charlotte and Rosa, that they would have almost laid down their lives in their service.

Her ladyship commended their attention, and they soon in safety reached their home. Mr. Montague was not yet returned, or he would doubtless have been

much alarmed at the situation of his beloved Charlotte, who, notwithstanding her efforts to disguise it, was seriously frightened at the events to which she had been witness at the ruins of Ruthvale Abbey.

Both ladies retired immediately to their chambers, to divest themselves of their wet garments. But a fresh source of anxiety arose to perplex the agitated Rosa; her child was absent; Mary had taken her out previous to the storm, and had not yet returned. Ever anxious for the safety of this beloved object, she could taste no peace till her arrival; and when that actually did take place, she snatched it from its nurse, and pressed it to her bosom with a joy known only to a mother. Thankful for the preservation of her child from supposed danger, she eagerly inquired where she had been sheltered from the storm, as she found that its clothes were perfectly dry; but how astonished was she at the account now given her by the artless Mary, the substance of which was,

that, having rambled a long way that evening, thinking the weather so beautiful, she had been suddenly overtaken by the storm, and seeing no habitation near, began to be alarmed for the safety of the child; but on turning down a lane, she saw, to her great joy, a house, at which she hoped she might gain shelter for the child; it was, however, surrounded by a wall, and she hesitated how she should gain admittance, as she felt fearful of ringing at the iron gates which led to the house. As she paused a gentleman advanced, who immediately sounded the bell, and in him she recognised the very stranger who had previously rescued her from the attack of the furious bull on the mountain. He also recollected her, and desired her to take refuge in his cottage, and his housekeeper would shew her every attention. Mary was accordingly conducted to her room, while the gentleman desired to have the child brought to him in the parlour; and so delighted was he with the sweet infant, that he bestowed

on it the most endearing caresses. From the housekeeper Mary learnt that her master's name was *Hastings*, but that she knew nothing of his history, or who he was, but that he was the best gentleman alive, only that he kept himself so secluded, and that she supposed he had been *crossed in love*, by his living so melancholy. Of him poor Mary was profuse in her praises, as she said he seemed born to be her guardian angel: it was not until the storm had entirely subsided that he would suffer them to depart, as the little Charlotte and him appeared as fond and familiar as if he had known her from her birth; and on parting he had requested Mary to bring the child at some future day.

From this account Rosa learnt, with increased astonishment, that this stranger was no other than the inhabitant of that beautiful cottage which she had so much admired. Strange it was that its master should have thus interested himself for her child, and she viewed it as one of those

associations of events which an all-wise Power directs: her gratitude was his, and she most sincerely commiserated in his supposed misfortunes. Too well she knew the pangs of ill-fated love; and she mentally raised a prayer to Heaven to ameliorate the sorrows of this suffering stranger, whom a various combination of circumstances had thus thrown upon her notice.

CHAPTER VIII.

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ON the return of Mr. Montague that evening, he was much surprised, and somewhat alarmed, at learning the terror to which his beloved Charlotte had been exposed, particularly as he saw, that although she endeavoured to make light of it, her spirits were seriously affected: at the terrific events to which she had been witness at Ruthvale Abbey, he endea-

voured to persuade both ladies that it must have been some person concealed from their view, or their fancy only, while labouring under the effect of the storm. They however both persisted to the contrary, and by their earnestness left Mr. Montague in great perplexity of mind; and he resolved the following morning to visit the place alone, and if possible elucidate the mystery which at present encompassed that gloomy place: he had frequently, during his former residence in Wales, heard the strange reports concerning it; but had merely supposed it resulting from the lower class of peasantry, whose weakness and superstition made them credulous, and ready to receive any idle tale. He had frequently wandered about the ruins, and had never observed any cause of alarm to himself: once indeed he heard soft music issuing from the ruins; but though he could see no one, yet he did not suffer the circumstance to alarm him; he concluded the instrument to be a flute; and as the ruins were im-

mense and intricate, he of course believed it to be some person who thus in solitude indulged his favourite amusement. He now however felt great concern at lady Charlotte and Rosa having been thus alarmed, as he knew their minds soared above such contemptible weakness, unless some great cause had transpired to terrify them; and he earnestly requested both ladies not to revisit a place at which they had experienced so much horror, unless accompanied by himself, when he should be able to detect any one who had the temerity to cause such alarm to a female bosom.

To this request they readily acceded, lady Charlotte declaring that she never wished to see the place again; and Rosa, cherishing a belief in her bosom of the dreadful event which had transpired there relative to herself, felt too much horror in revisiting a spot stained with human blood; and though she still remained silent as to the cause of her former alarm, she most

earnestly assured Mr. Montague that she would never venture to the ruins again.

The next morning lady Charlotte found herself very indisposed, having taken cold from the wetness of her clothes the preceding evening; she therefore kept her room, and Mr. Montague and Rosa took breakfast alone; after which, without revealing his intention to either lady, he bent his steps towards Ruthvale Abbey: he entered the hall, and closely scrutinized the place: all was quiet, and he advanced with a firm step to the spot at which Rosa had described the figure to vanish. He beheld, as the ladies had described, the monumental form of death, standing upon a sort of tomb; but as it was erected against the wall, there was certainly no place behind where any human being could have concealed himself: he next proceeded to examine the arrow in the hand of death, which was firm and immoveable: he was therefore convinced that this must have been only the fancy of the ladies, while under the impression

of the terrors which encompassed them. After minutely examining the place, he was obliged to quit it, as unsatisfied as when he entered; for nothing here could be unravelled. On passing the outside of the tower, he beheld the arched door, which stood open, as when he before saw it; and he resolved, as he was alone, to venture in. All was calm, and not a sound arose to disturb the stillness of the scene. He advanced up the broken steps, and arrived in safety at the same apartment where Rosa had on a former occasion been so much alarmed; unconscious, however, of the horrors to which she had been witness, he viewed the desolation of the chamber with no other emotion, than that of curiosity, or a sort of intuitive melancholy, which generally pervades the mind on the sight of ancient ruins: one circumstance alone surprised him, on beholding the glass candlesticks, in which were wax tapers, and by their clean appearance, evinced that they had lately been arranged. This was a mystery he

could not fathom, and occasioned some perplexity in his mind; but finding nothing more to fix his attention, he left the chamber, and crossing through the other apartment, which led to the flight of steps by which he had entered, he thought he heard a slight noise, or gentle motion: he paused, resolving to satisfy himself if possible: a low sound broke upon his ear, which he fancied was the murmur of complaint, being mournful and imperfect.—“Who is there?” said he, in a resolute tone.

This question was answered by an instantaneous flight of something across the room, which flapped by him with such rapidity as to prevent his ascertaining the object; a cloud of dust also filled the apartment, which obscured his sight, and he remained for a few minutes lost in astonishment. As the dust however began to disperse, he rallied his courage, and sought round the chamber for the object of his alarm; and again hearing a gentle motion, he directed his eyes towards the



sound; but scarcely could he suppress the smile which rose upon his face, as looking at the arches of one of the casements, he beheld an owl, who was flapping its wings with violence. The mystery was now unravelled: this sombre tenant of the desolate chamber had been disturbed by his entrance, and when he spoke, unused to the sound of a human voice, it had flown from its hiding-place, and by its rapid motion, taking with it the accumulation of dust which had been for years undisturbed.—“This then,” thought Mr. Montague, “is the ghost which pervades this tower, and which fills the mind of the superstitious with terror. Poor bird! thou art unconscious of thy formidable power, and fly with terror at the approach of man. Thus it is that the most simple events gain upon the imagination of mankind, and without ascertaining the true cause, suffer themselves to be led astray by the most idle tales which their better reason, uncontrolled by superstition, would laugh at.”

Well satisfied with this discovery, he left the tower, and without encountering any further horrors, arrived at Rosewood Hall. On entering the drawing-room he found sir Owen Llewellyn in conversation with Rosa.

Mr. Montague, extending his hand, expressed his pleasure at seeing him; and Rosa now took the opportunity of quitting the room. She had been rather embarrassed by his unexpected visit, being alone when he was announced. Lady Charlotte had not left her room, consequently Rosa was compelled to receive him.

With undisguised tenderness he expressed his pleasure at seeing her; and seating himself by her side, introduced a conversation of a more tender nature than Rosa knew how to support. With a view to turn the subject, she reverted to his library, which she had seen when at Llewellyn Castle, and reminded him of a promise which he had made her of lending her a book, which she had expressed a wish to read.

Sir Owen instantly drew forth an elegant little volume from his pocket.—“A request of yours,” said he, “affords me too much pleasure in the performance to be obliterated from my memory. You have only to name your wishes, and if Llewellyn Castle, or its master, can gratify them, they are at your command.”

Rosa, blushing deeply, received the book with a trembling hand, vexed that any request of hers should thus have afforded him an opportunity of making such professions. She replied coldly to his expressions, which evidently hurt him; and the conversation became more and more embarrassing, until, to the great relief of Rosa, Mr. Montague entered the room.

On quitting the gentlemen, she retired to her own chamber, resolving not to return to the drawing-room until sir Owen had left the house. With a view to beguile the passing hour, she opened the book which he had lent her, in doing which a folded paper dropped out, and on

examining it she found the following lines :—

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*THE FIRST FEELING OF LOVE,*

ADDRESSED TO ROSA.

What means this pleasing melancholy gloom,  
 This heaviness, that steals upon my heart—  
 These mingled thoughts, that seem at once t'impart  
 The joys of life, the terrors of the tomb?

Methinks such tranquil feelings of delight,  
 With gentle pain, and grief so darkened o'er,  
 Life's passing strange events could ne'er excite,  
 For one fleet moment in this breast before.

My thoughts are varied, yet with one accord,  
 Toward one bright and sparkling goal they run,  
 Where beauty reigns triumphant and adored,  
 A prize which by the heart alone is won.

Oh, were *my heart* in utterance free,  
 'Twould say its hopes, its fears were center'd all in *thee*.

OWEN.

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Vexed beyond measure at this declaration of his sentiments, Rosa kept gazing on the paper, without hardly knowing she did so. To return it was the first impulse

which suggested itself; but even this must be done with delicacy and caution. She felt convinced that sir Owen possessed the most refined sentiments; his feelings were nice—and though she could not return his love, yet she must do justice to his virtues, and let her refusal be couched in terms as distant to rudeness as possible; and, on mature deliberation, she resolved, when she should return the book, to place the paper in the same position as when she received it, when she should hope, that this rejection of his verses would sufficiently convince him that he had nothing to hope from her.

She was much grieved to think that it was her fate to wound the peace of another worthy object, as she both respected and admired sir Owen as a friend. To lady Editha she also felt much attached, and it caused her sincere sorrow in the idea that she must now be compelled to shun the society of that lady, in order to avoid any opportunities with her son.

With a mind agitated by various causes, she remained in her own room until the dinner-bell rang; and having ascertained from Mary that sir Owen had left the house, she descended to the dining-parlour, where she found lady Charlotte, who was much recovered from her indisposition.

After dinner Mr. Montague proceeded to inform the ladies of his visit to the abbey, and assuming a very grave face, assured them that he had encountered a most marvellous event.

"For Heaven's sake," said lady Charlotte, with a countenance of alarm, "why did you venture to that horrible place, after the accounts which we last night gave you?"

"For that very reason," he replied: "could you suppose that I could suffer you to be so alarmed, without endeavouring to ascertain the cause? of course I took the earliest opportunity of examining the place."

"And what was the result?" interrupted her ladyship.

"Why, my dear Charlotte," returned Mr. Montague, "though I give all due credit to your veracity, yet I must believe in this instance your fears overcame your better judgment, at least as far as regards the mysterious movement of the monumental figure, which is firm and immovable, and was no doubt only 'the very coinage and ecstasy of your brain.'"

Lady Charlotte shook her head.—  
"Could we have both been so deceived?" said she; "did not Rosa also at the same instant behold it? sure we cannot doubt the evidence of our senses?"

"No," replied Mr. Montague; "but we should endeavour to view the passing events with a clear circumspection: that you had some cause of alarm, I will not doubt your veracity by disbelieving; but had you been in a calm and tranquil state of mind, you would have been able to have ascertained the true cause, when your



fears would have been turned to mirth, and your terrors to ridicule, as mine have been this morning. You know," continued he, " that I said I had witnessed a marvellous event, and was nearly as wise in preparing to encounter the object of my alarm, as Don Quixotte in waging war with the windmills."

Both ladies saw the smile which played upon the lip of Mr. Montague, and they felt vexed at exposing themselves to ridicule, when they were so perfectly convinced as to the reality of what they had seen.

" As I could not find this ghost which had alarmed you in the hall," added Mr. Montague, " I thought I would pay a visit to the tower, and after a difficult ascent up the broken steps, I gained admission to the ruinous apartments, and after crossing two or three, arrived at one hung round with wax tapers, which, although the furniture is all mouldering to decay, yet they strangely preserve their proper appearance in this chamber."

The countenance of Rosa underwent such a change, as to excite the notice of Mr. Montague; the mention of that room filled her with horror, and she was on the point of revealing what she had been witness to there; but a moment's reflection convinced her that she had better remain silent, and glad was she that she did so; when Mr. Montague proceeded to relate his rencounter with the owl, the particulars of which he gave with a ludicrous gravity; and concluded with a hearty laugh at the poor tenant of the desolate chamber.

Rosa essayed to smile, but the effort was painful; the horrors to which she had been exposed in that room had been occasioned by very different circumstances, and her maturer reason and reflection convinced her that she had not been the victim of mere superstition; and she sincerely trusted in an all-wise Power to relieve her mind from the weight that oppressed it, by having that mystery elucidated, which time or circumstances, she hoped, would unravel, but which at present dis-

tressed her so much, that, in the words of the poet, she could exclaim—

“ ———’Twere better to be with the dead,  
Than on the torture of the mind to lie  
In restless ecstasy.”

## CHAPTER IX.

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NOTHING material occurred until the day arrived on which the family at Rosewood were to dine, according to promise, at lady Editha’s. Rosa would fain have been excused—she pleaded indisposition; but lady Charlotte pressed her so much, that she could no longer refuse; she felt a degree of embarrassment at meeting with sir Owen after his declaration, and with a heavy heart dressed herself to accompany her friends. She pressed her sweet infant to her heart, and desired Mary to be careful of her charge during her absence.

The girl promised to obey her mis-

tress's orders; and added, that she would take her a ramble by the banks of the river, where she supposed she should see the strange gentleman walking, that took so much notice of Miss Charlotte.

Rosa looked rather grave, as she began to suspect that there was too great an intimacy being formed between this gentleman and herself; and the distance between him and the humble Mary precluded any good result from these interviews; and she once more warned the girl against any further intimacy with this Mr. Hastings.

Poor Mary however answered her with such genuine simplicity, that her mistress could not but acquit her of any improper motives.—“It would be cruel, ma'am,” said she, “not to let him see the sweet child, he has taken such a fancy to her; it would make your heart ache, ma'am, to hear how piteous he sighs over her; I am sure I have seen the tears stand in his eyes, poor gentleman! it is a sad thing to be so melancholy; but it is all through being crossed in love, ma'am; and you

know nobody can tell what one's fate may be—it may be one's own case some day.”

A message from lady Charlotte, to say she was ready, interrupted the loquacity of Mary, and Rosa instantly repaired to her ladyship; and Mr. Montague, taking a hand of each, led them to the carriage.

Their drive was short, but pleasant; all nature seemed to smile around; but the thorn that rankled at the heart of Rosa prevented her from enjoying the beauty of the scene so much as she would otherwise have done. She trembled with emotion at the idea of how she should meet with sir Owen, who would, of course, know that she must now have read his verses, and as she had not yet returned them, she felt fearful lest he might misconstrue her behaviour. On the carriage stopping before the ancient edifice of Llewellyn, her agitation was so great, that respiration became difficult. Lady Charlotte saw her emotion, and endeavoured to rally her spirits, before she could
lady Charlotte but

which they had little suspected, and which plunged all in the greatest confusion.

We have before made mention of lady Melbourne and her daughter, whose return to Wales had caused so much joy to Mrs. Lloyd, the housekeeper at Melbourne House: with her ladyship lady Editha Llewellyn had been most intimate during her former residence in the Vale of Clwyd, and had much regretted the loss of her society, when the fatal event of the death of lord Melbourne had compelled her to quit the place; and never more perhaps would she have been induced to visit it, had not it have been to gratify the wish of lord and lady Athlyn, the latter of whom she doted on with romantic affection.

The beautiful Alicia was indeed one of Fortune's favourites; lovely in person, and gifted with the most excellent heart and understanding, nursed in the school of affluence and indulgence, her passions were warm and lasting; ever brought up under the eye of lady Melbourne, she loved this

only remaining parent with an affection bordering upon adoration; and when she bestowed her hand, accompanied with her heart, on lord Athlyn, she still felt that her beloved mother also reigned there with powerful sway: to part from her was impossible, and as lord Athlyn wished to reside for a short time in Wales, she persuaded lady Melbourne to return to her estate, and by forming one establishment, prevent a separation taking place.

To this her ladyship agreed; though on arriving at Melbourne House her spirits were so agitated, that for the first few weeks she was incapable of seeing any one but her own family. As she recovered from the first ebullition of sorrow, she began to think of her old friends; but twenty years had made a wide alteration—fresh generations had arisen from those whom the earth now enclosed, and scarce a face was left whom she could recognise. To her great pleasure she found that her old friend lady Editha was still living, and she left her card at her door. Her ladyship

soon repaired to Melbourne House, and the ladies were much affected at the sight of each other. They had parted in the days of youth and vigour, and they could not behold without emotion the alteration which years had made in their persons; but the change was most apparent in lady Melbourne, although many years younger than lady Editha, whose age appeared as an ornament, rather than a decay; while poor lady Melbourne, wasted almost to a shadow, seemed borne down with the weight of that grief which years could not efface: but the nature of these ladies were widely different, though both possessed hearts cast in the tenderest mould.

Lady Editha was of a firm and strong disposition; early trained in the bright paths of religion, she had acquired a degree of command over herself, which had enabled her to bear her trials with fortitude and resignation.

Lady Melbourne was all softness and sensibility; her feelings were too fine to be happy, and the least trial overcame her

susceptible bosom ; she was even romantic in her attachments, and any disappointment in her hopes caused her the greatest sorrow ; it will not be wondered at then that the loss of her husband should plunge her in so much grief—it was a blow from which she had not yet recovered ; and most truly shocked was lady Editha to find the ravages of despair so strongly marked on her countenance : their meeting was truly affectionate, and lady Editha, with all the warmth of friendship, endeavoured to reason lady Melbourne into resignation and content.

Lord and lady Athlyn were out taking a ramble in the vale, consequently her ladyship could not that morning be introduced to them, but she prevailed on lady Melbourne to promise to dine with her, accompanied by her son and daughter. Lady Editha named the day on which she expected the family from Rosewood, thinking it would prove an agreeable introduction to all parties ; and at the time inted lady Melbourne was announced.

She entered the drawing-room of lady Editha, leading by the hand a lady most elegantly attired in white satin, who courtesied on her entrance with grace and diffidence; a gentleman followed their steps, and sir Owen arose to receive him.

Lady Editha extended her hand to lady Melbourne, and looking at her lovely companion, with a smile exclaimed—“Lady Charlotte, I am happy to see you—I did not know that my old friend, lady Melbourne, and you, were already acquainted—I anticipated the pleasure of introducing you: but where are the rest of our friends, and where is lady Alicia Athlyn? I hope I shall not be disappointed of the pleasure of seeing her.”

“You labour under some mistake,” replied lady Melbourne, somewhat surprised by this address; “give me leave to present to you lord and lady Athlyn—this lady is my own, my beloved Alicia, who will receive much pleasure in an introduction to her mother’s valued friend.”

“Lady Alicia Athlyn!” re-echoed lady

Editha; "sure I am bewildered! say, are you not lady Charlotte Montague? what mystery is this that you are practising upon me?"

"I perceive your ladyship must labour under some mistake," said lord Athlyn; "this lady, I am proud to say, is lady Alicia Athlyn; nor have we any knowledge of the lady to whom you allude, but who, I must conclude, bears so great a resemblance to my beloved Alicia, as thus to cause you so much surprise."

"Resemblance!" said lady Editha; "your lordship must pardon my repeating your words, but it is *more than resemblance*—the same features, the same figure, and the same voice.—Say, Owen, my son," continued she, "is it not true?"

"I fear," replied he, "the present company will naturally condemn our rudeness in this strange reception; but it is an event of much astonishment to behold in lady Alicia Athlyn such a wonderful likeness to a friend of ours, whom we expect to join our circle, and whose presence will

perhaps serve as an apology for this apparent want of breeding."

"I am glad," said lady Alicia, with a good-humoured smile, "that you expect the lady here—I shall like of all things to see her; shall not you, my dear mamma, like to behold my counterpart? Do you not remember that our poor old housekeeper, Mrs. Lloyd, on first seeing me, said she was quite sure she had beheld me somewhere before? so it is evident that I do resemble some one."

Lady Melbourne was greatly agitated—she could scarcely reply to the lively remark of her daughter; and lady Editha still believed some *finesse* was being practised upon her, when the names of lady Charlotte and Mr. Montague were announced. Rosa leaned upon the arm of her ladyship, and advanced timidly; but all stopped in mutual surprise—the ladies Alicia and Charlotte gazed on each other with mute astonishment—the difference of dress could indeed alone distinguish them, and the presence of both only in-

creased the evident likeness which they bore each other. A mystery in the bosom of Rosa was instantly unravelled, as she beheld in lord and lady Athlyn the very pair whom she had taken for the guilty lady Charlotte and her supposed lover. All expressed their surprise, but lady Charlotte was agitated beyond her spirits—the colour fled her cheeks, and she sunk on a chair, while lady Melbourne was evidently fainting.

Lady Alicia flew to her side—"My beloved mamma, be not thus agitated—it is indeed strange that this lady and I resemble each other so much, but do not let it affect you so—we must, we shall be friends; as our persons are so united, so must be our hearts."

"As like as 'cherry unto cherry!' exclaimed lady Editha; "now can my mistake be pardoned? but, dearest ladies, let me then have the pleasure of joining your hands in mutual affection, for, as lady Alicia has asserted, you must indeed be friends."

"Friends!" re-echoed lady Charlotte, greatly agitated, "if my heart does not deceive me, a nearer tie than friendship will exist between us; nature tells me I am right—say, lady Alicia—oh, confirm my hopes—have you a mark on your arm resembling a bunch of grapes?"

"Certainly I have," replied her ladyship, in much surprise; "but how is it possible that you, a stranger, can be in possession of that circumstance?"

Lady Charlotte rushed towards her, and clasping her arms around the astonished Alicia, exclaimed—"Then let me greet a *sister*—oh, my beloved, my long-lost Julia, receive the embraces of your happy Charlotte!"

"My *sister*!" reiterated lady Alicia—"oh, my beloved mamma, have I then a sister? never did I know you had any other child but me."

The appeal to lady Melbourne was useless—on hearing the assertion of lady Charlotte she had clasped her hands to-

gether, and exclaiming—"Oh God, thy will be done!" sunk insensible on a sofa.

All was now confusion—each party gazed on the other, as if to reveal the mystery which surrounded them; while lady Charlotte, supported by Rosa, still clung to the form of her whom she felt persuaded was indeed her long-lost twin sister.

CHAPTER X.

THE scene which now presented itself can be imagined by the reader: lord Athlyn and Mr. Montague felt anxious for the welfare of their respective ladies, while lady Alicia supported the fainting form of lady Melbourne.—"This discovery has too greatly agitated her declining strength," said she, in a voice of alarm.—"Oh, my dear sister," continued she, pressing the hand of lady Charlotte, "though unable

to fathom this mystery, yet something tells me you must be so. The pleasure of such an event is damped by the fear of having agitated *our mother*—oh, Heaven! if we should meet only to witness her departure! agony is in the thought!”

“*Our parents*, dearest sister,” said lady Charlotte, “have long since slept in their peaceful grave—some mystery has attended your steps, which must be unravelled.”

“Merciful Heaven!” exclaimed lady Alicia, turning extremely pale, “sure this must all be illusion! am I not what I seem? oh, look there at my beloved, my suffering mamma! say, am I not her child?”

Lady Charlotte shook her head; while lord Athlyn, seeing the emotion of his lady, tenderly embraced her.—“Be composed, my beloved Alicia,” he cried, “and bear this wonderful discovery with fortitude. No change of birth can make any difference in my eyes—you are my own, my dearest bride, and nothing can part us; therefore be not thus agitated.”

“ I trust, my lord,” said Mr. Montague, “ that lady Athlyn will have no reason to be ashamed of her birth ; though unable at present to elucidate the mystery which surrounds her, yet I am convinced she must be the long lost twin sister of lady Charlotte, who was stolen in her infancy.”

At this moment lady Melbourne raised her head, and catching the last sentence of Mr. Montague, she wildly exclaimed— “ I did not steal her ; it was not I who robbed the parents of a child ; it was I who preserved her—but for me she would have found a watery grave ; yet you will all look upon me with contempt ; and you, my Alicia, will hate me.”

“ Hate you !” repeated lady Alicia, springing from the arms of her husband, and throwing herself on her knees before the agitated lady Melbourne, “ hate you ! Oh, my beloved mamma, can I ever love you sufficient ! Much I anticipate I owe to your care, and if I am not really your child by affinity, yet do I feel more than ever a daughter felt for a mother. But

oh, speak then! reveal this mystery, for my heart will break!"

Lady Melbourne threw her arms around this beloved object, and wept on her bosom.—"Oh, my adored Alica, my heart is breaking! must I then acknowledge the agonizing truth? yet the will of Heaven seems to interfere in this strange meeting, to bring me to confession, and before I die, to ease my mind of a weight with which it is oppressed. Lady Charlotte Montague," said she, addressing her with a solemn voice, "in your eyes I fear I shall appear as criminal; yet, when you shall understand that I preserved this dear child's life, you will receive it as some atonement for the concealment of which I have been guilty; that she had a twin sister, whom she greatly resembled when an infant, I have been already informed—no doubts can therefore be entertained as to your affinity; receive her then to your heart, and be assured you will have a treasure which I fear will cost me my life to resign."

The sisters again embraced each other ; while lady Charlotte, though greatly agitated, threw herself on her knees by the side of the weeping Alicia.—“ The preserver of my dear sister’s life,” she exclaimed, “ must be entitled to my warmest gratitude. Oh that my parents were here to thank you for your goodness ! but, alas ! they died in ignorance as to the fate of their dear little Julia.”

Lady Melbourne was much affected ; she pressed the hand of lady Charlotte, and wept aloud : this somewhat relieved her oppressed heart ; while all the rest of the company entreated her to regain her composure.

“ Oh, my dearest mamma,” cried lady Alicia, “ reveal the mystery which surrounds me ; I am on the rack to know my birth, which never till this moment had I any reason to doubt.”

“ Be patient, dearest Alicia,” she cried, “ you shall know all, but my spirits are not yet equal to the task ; grant me a short time, and I will reveal all.”

Lady Editha now advanced, and taking the hand of lady Melbourne, endeavoured to sooth her agitated spirits.—“ You are not fit at present to enter into any explanation,” she cried, “ and I am sure lady Alicia and lady Charlotte are both too considerate to wish you to attempt it until you are more composed. The last dinner-bell has just rung, therefore suffer me to lead you to the dining-parlour, and let me entreat you all to compose yourselves before the servants. This strange discovery having happened under my roof authorizes me to speak thus; and I trust a happy issue will be the result of this day’s meeting.”

Lady Melbourne would fain have excused herself from joining the party, but all entreated her with such marked kindness, that she rallied her agitated spirits; and the gentlemen led the ladies down stairs. Sir Owen took the hand of Rosa, who, though a silent spectator of this scene, had not been the least unmoved: she felt for the agitation of her dear lady

Charlotte, and rejoiced at the prospect of her sister being restored to her. Sir Owen felt her hand tremble within his own, and he flattered himself that he might have a share in her agitation, and during dinner he paid her the most marked attention. She found it difficult to assume the reserve she wished, for so delicately polite was his manners towards her, that, without being guilty of rudeness, she could not repel him.

After dinner the ladies retired to the drawing-room, where the sisters, anxious to testify their affection, again embraced each other; and lady Charlotte, taking the hand of Rosa, led her to lady Athlyn, and presented her as her chosen friend, whom she must also henceforward love for her sake.

Her ladyship received our heroine with that sweetness which marked her character, and with a warmth that evinced the goodness of her heart.

Rosa now saw the mistakes under which she had laboured, with respect to lady

Charlotte, to whom she revealed the uneasiness which she had experienced on her account.

Her ladyship was surprised, and good-humouredly chid her for not having spoken to her on the subject before.

Lady Alicia immediately recollected the conversation which passed between her and lord Athlyn, and added, they had taken frequent rambles in the vale unattended.

Rosa also found, on inquiry, that it must have been lady Alicia whom she had twice beheld when in London, and which had occasioned her so much distress, in supposing it to be lady Charlotte.

During this time poor lady Melbourne was endeavouring to collect her agitated spirits.—“ My dear Alicia,” she cried, “ I have much to unfold, and no doubt you are impatient to hear to whom you owe your birth. On this point I cannot satisfy you, therefore we will first request lady Charlotte to inform us of all particulars

concerning your family ; after which I will fully relate how I became possessed of you ; and rest assured, dearest girl, though not your mother by the ties of nature, yet few parents perhaps have felt the ardent affection which I have for you."

" Oh, my dearest mamma," replied lady Alicia, " for still you must suffer me to call you so, never can I repay your more than maternal care of me ; it is you who have made me what I am, and perhaps raised me beyond a sphere in which I have a right to move."

" Be composed on that head, dearest sister," said lady Charlotte ; " though not moving in so exalted a rank as lady Melbourne, yet our parents were respectable ; and I am sure you possess too good a heart to despise their memory because they were unfortunate. But, with the permission of all present, I will relate the particulars of my life, which will fully explain all."

Lady Editha delicately offered to leave the room, not being a party concerned ;

but lady Charlotte and lady Melbourne begged her to be reseated, as they wished to have no concealments from her.

Lady Charlotte then, though not without much emotion, entered upon her little history.

Poor lady Athlyn was also greatly agitated, as she heard her birth revealed, and sobbed aloud, as lady Charlotte described the grief of her parents at the loss of their little Julia.

"No doubt," added lady Charlotte, "can, I think, exist of our affinity—our wonderful resemblance, the mark on your arm, all prove the relationship which exists between us; and if lady Melbourne will have the goodness to say how you came to be under her protection, it will perhaps elucidate the whole mystery."

"I have been calling all my fortitude to my aid," said lady Melbourne, "and I will explain all."

At that moment the gentlemen, who were likewise impatient to know the re-

sult of this strange discovery, entered the drawing-room.

“ You are come most opportunely,” said she, addressing lord Athlyn; “ I am going now to make a confession which most materially concerns your lordship, inasmuch as it relates to your beloved bride. I acknowledge I have deceived you with regard to her birth; but, oh! promise me you will not think unkindly of her for my fault: she is innocent, and knew not of the deception which I practised: it would break my heart if she were to suffer in your lordship’s estimation on that account.”

“ Perish such an idea!” replied his lordship: “ is she not the chosen of my heart—my own, my beloved wife? and it matters not to me if she is the daughter of a peasant, as long as I know that no earthly power can tear her from my arms.”

Lady Athlyn cast a look of tender gratitude on her lord, while lady Melbourne

—“ Noble, generous-minded
urance gives me new life,

and enables me with more composure to give the promised recital. Oh, my friends, pity my weakness, and excuse my faults."

All strove with the utmost kindness to sooth her spirits, and after a little while she entered upon her eventful history, which we shall now give in our own words, in order to explain more fully the mystery which had attended the strange disappearance of the infant Julia.

CHAPTER XI.

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LADY Melbourne was the only child of her parents, who moving in an exalted station of life, bestowed every pains and indulgence which wealth could command on their infant daughter: every wish was gratified; and being naturally of a susceptible nature, her feelings became romantically fine; her heart was however good, and her understanding cultivated

and refined; and the young lady Alicia was universally admired. Her parents doted on her to excess, and it was with rapture they beheld her ripening into womanhood, adorned with beauty and accomplishments. Free from every degree of pride, it was her delight to wander among the poor tenants of her father, and relieve their distresses. Her charities were unbounded, and her name universally blessed. Of such a daughter, well might her parents be proud: to them she appeared almost a spotless angel, without faults; and to have denied so good a child any thing, would by them have been deemed a cruelty; hence it was that they laid the foundation for years of misery, which the fair Alicia was doomed to suffer hereafter. Had they early taught her the necessity of self-denial, and impressed upon her mind that it is not ordained for mortals to enjoy pleasure, unalloyed, on earth, and fortified her to bear the disappointments which await us, all might have been well. On the contrary,

by never permitting her to form a wish ungratified, she indulged in the idea that every fond hope would be realized, and the least disappointment overwhelmed her with the most acute sorrow.

Young, beautiful, and rich, it is not to be supposed that she passed unheeded in society; many a heart sighed for the fair Alicia—but sighed in vain; for her affections were as romantic as her character—she must love to enthusiasm, or not at all; and the young men who had offered themselves were not of the susceptible nature of which she had pictured to herself in the choice of a husband.

The time however arrived when she was to feel those passions which had hitherto dwelt only in her imagination. At a ball given at the earl of C——'s, she first beheld lord Melbourne, and was captivated with his handsome person and fascinating manners: his lordship was then in his thirtieth year, and the fair Alicia only eighteen; but he, of all persons, appeared the one ordained by nature to win



her affections; and when he begged the honour of her hand in the dance, she seemed to tread on air, as she listened to the animated remarks of her noble companion, just returned from sea. His lordship was warm and enthusiastic in his admiration of his native land, and his fair countrywomen appeared like so many beauteous angels to his delighted gaze; but all fell short in his estimation, compared to his lovely partner, and a mutual passion inflamed their hearts. Lady Alicia was delighted; her imagination had always painted in glowing colours the bliss of first impressions: her heart could never have been won by a long and formal courtship; it must be love at first sight, or not at all; and fate had thrown an object in her way who possessed as ardent a nature as herself; and lord Melbourne was as deeply enamoured as the fair Alicia could have wished him; and on parting with her, he requested, and obtained permission, to pay his respects on the following morning.

It is needless to enter into a detail of a courtship so hastily entered into, and which, contrary to the general assertion of "true love," met with no opposition. The parents of lady Alicia could not think of opposing the inclinations of their darling, when she candidly acknowledged the affection which she cherished for his lordship, whose birth and fortune were likewise equal to her own; while on the other hand lord Melbourne had no friends to consult; his parents had long since paid the debt of nature, and he stood almost without a relative: their union therefore followed as quick as possible, and their happiness was almost too great for earth. As much the idol of her husband as she had been of her fond parents, lady Melbourne found herself treated with the same indulgence as ever; her wishes were anticipated by her adoring lord, whom she loved with that romantic affection so inherent to her nature. The first alloy to her happiness was the death of

both her parents : this was indeed a blow ; but she looked to lord Melbourne for consolation, and in his bosom found the pure delights which arise from true sympathy and congenial sentiments : he had now no rival in her affections ; her heart was all his own, and he was the god of her idolatry.

Years rolled on, and only served to increase their felicity ; and lord and lady Melbourne seemed to the admiring crowd as a pattern of conjugal happiness : so indeed they were—but still one obstacle arose to excite a degree of regret—lady Melbourne did not increase her family ; and though lord Melbourne did not in the least relax in his love towards his lady on that account, yet she fancied it might cause some discontent in his mind, as he so much wished for an heir to his estate. Unaccustomed as she had ever been to have her wishes denied, this disappointment preyed upon her mind, and she was secretly uneasy and unhappy.

Her trials were however only now on

the commencement, for lord Melbourne was obliged to take the command of his ship, and his absence would no doubt be for a long period. To paint the agony of their separation is impossible; we must leave it to the feeling heart to imagine the sufferings of a pair so fondly attached, whose very existence seemed to hang upon each other. But the fatal moment arrived, and lady Melbourne was received in an insensible state to the arms of her attendant; while his lordship hastened away to conceal those feelings of which he felt ashamed, and he dashed the tear from his eye, which he considered as derogatory to the character of a British sailor.

For a long time lady Melbourne gave herself up to melancholy; she seemed left alone, as it were, a prey to grief. She had no relations, either on her husband's side or her own, to console her, and she yielded herself to despair. But, as if Heaven took pity on her forlorn state, a circumstance arose, which again revived hope in her bosom. She found she was likely to

become a mother, and this unexpected happiness caused the sunshine of pleasure to beam in her face.

With what joy did she anticipate on the return of her lord to present to him the long-wished-for treasure! that moment she thought would repay her for all her sufferings; and when at length she clasped a living infant in her arms, her sensations were almost too great to bear. The child proved to be a daughter, and the delighted mother hailed it as the future harbinger of happiness to her lord.

By the first conveyance possible the joyful news was communicated to his lordship, and by the next ship a letter was brought in answer. This contained every sentiment of the most ardent love, and his transports at hearing he was a father; he concluded by imploring his adored Alicia to be careful of the health of herself and sweet infant, whom he longed to clasp in his paternal embrace.

Lady Melbourne now once more felt happy, and she resolved to set her heart

at rest, and in her maternal duties pass away the time until her lord's return. She had now a fresh object to endear her to life, and she seemed entered on a new existence.

The young Alicia was a fine and lovely babe, and promised years of health and vigour; but, alas! in the midst of all her hopes and joys, poor lady Melbourne was doomed to misery; this adored, this darling object, was suddenly snatched from her by the hands of death, and the tomb closed upon the earthly happiness of the unfortunate lady Melbourne.

What pen can paint her grief, her distraction? in the agony of her heart, she dared to murmur at the decrees of Heaven, and instead of bowing to its all-wise mandates, again sunk a prey to despondency; a settled melancholy took possession of her mind, and she would wander in the most sequestered spots which the surrounding country afforded her an opportunity of doing.

It was in one of these rambles that, sup-

this unexpected discovery, sunk upon her knees before the agitated lady Melbourne, and implored for mercy.

"Mercy!" repeated her ladyship; "canst thou dare to ask for mercy, at a moment when you were trampling down her sacred bonds? Precious babe!" she continued, looking at the child, and holding it to her bosom, "thou hast indeed escaped a dreadful fate! Never more shalt thou be exposed to such inhumanity."

"Ah, lady!" exclaimed the woman, "I was driven to the act by dire necessity. Poor child! she is starving, and what could I do with her?"

"A *mother* ask what she could do with her child!" said her ladyship, with emotion. "Work for her—beg for her—any thing to preserve its life! Oh, if you did but know what it is to feel the loss of a child, as I do, you would never ask that question."

All this time the poor infant clung to lady Melbourne, as if conscious of her being a protector; and notwithstanding



the poverty of its appearance, her ladyship saw that it was a most beautiful and interesting child. A thought immediately rushed on her mind, which, with the romance so inherent to her nature, she encouraged with ardour. Providence, she thought, had sent this little helpless one in her way to supply the loss of her own, and she resolved to protect it from that hour.—“Tell me,” said she, sternly, to the woman, “what motive could induce you to commit so barbarous an action? reveal the truth concerning this child, or dread the punishment to which I can consign you.”

The woman, terrified at this menace, confessed, that some time before, while at the town of ———, she had stolen this child from its nurse; but that she had failed in her motive, for its having a twin sister, who so greatly resembled her, she had intended to have stolen them both, as their wonderful likeness to each other, and being twins, would have caused her a vast deal of charity, as she lived by telling

fortunes and begging. She was however frustrated in her design, and only succeeded in bearing off one, which was the present helpless object; that she travelled all over the country with it, eluding pursuit, but being unsuccessful in her means of gaining a living, the child was now in a state of starvation; and being weary of her burden, she considered it less cruel to plunge it into the river, than to leave it to its fate, or prolong its miserable existence.

Lady Melbourne listened with horror to this account.—“Well,” said she, “from this moment I will be her protector; and if you will promise never to reveal to any one an account of this transaction, I will let you escape from the punishment which you so richly merit.”

It is needless to say, the woman joyfully acceded to this proposal; and lady Melbourne darted away with her prize as fast as her trembling limbs would permit, fearing lest the woman should follow, and discover who she was.

Her first care was to place it, at a cot-

tage, where she supplied it with fresh clothes; and a short time restored the child to its proper health.

Lady Melbourne had now again a fresh object to rouse her from her grief, and she looked upon this child as a boon sent her from Heaven to sooth her sorrows.

About this time she received another letter from her lord, now admiral lord Melbourne, who by his gallant conduct had been raised to that rank. He spoke now of his return, and anticipated, at no very distant period, the felicity of clasping his wife and child to his heart.

Lady Melbourne now prepared to carry into effect the scheme she had projected. Fortunately, as she now considered it, she had not had an opportunity of letting lord Melbourne know of the decease of his child, and as she had no relatives of her own, nor of her husband's side, her design was the more easily put into practice; and as her *protégée* seemed about the age which her own child would have been, she resolved to pass it upon lord Melbourne as

their own offspring. To effect this end, she privately had it baptized by the name of Alicia, and dismissing all her old servants, and changing her residence, she thought she should be secure from discovery. She wrote to lord Melbourne, to say she would meet him in Wales, as she should hasten to their estate, which lay in the Vale of Clwyd, whither she should henceforth wish to reside.

The blooming child was now taken home; a fresh servant was hired for its nurse; and with only a few attendants, who were all strange, her ladyship commenced her journey to Wales: so delighted was she with her project, that she looked on the little Alicia with delight; and had it been her own, she could not have borne it a greater affection. On arriving at Melbourne House, she engaged a fresh supply of attendants, among whom was Mrs. Lloyd, the housekeeper; and not a doubt, of course, was entertained as to the birth of the young lady Alicia.

Little more remains to be said; lord

Melbourne soon arrived, and felt all the transports of a father, as he folded his supposed offspring in his embrace; while poor lady Melbourne, for the first time, felt the pangs attendant on deception; and though rejoiced at the rapture of her lord, yet her agitation was excessive at the idea of deceiving him; once however accomplished, the fiat was cast, and as she did not give birth to any more offspring, she congratulated herself on the fortunate event which had made her the protector of the lovely Alicia.

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## CHAPTER XII.

" ————— Sincerity,  
Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave  
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,  
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,  
To take dissimulation's winding way."

THE warning contained in these lines was felt in all its force by lady Melbourne, who, although still rejoicing in the success of her plan, yet hardly ever enjoyed a moment's peace of mind, for fear of discovery, which she endeavoured to persuade herself was next to impossible: lord Melbourne doted on his child to excess, and lady Melbourne concluded it would now be the utmost cruelty to undeceive him as to her birth. The cup of happiness was not however ordained to be long in the possession of her ladyship, for in about two years after the return of lord

Melbourne, he was seized with a fever, which terminated his life.

The sufferings of lady Melbourne on this occasion have already been recorded by Mrs. Lloyd, the housekeeper; but a pang which no one knew harassed the heart of her ladyship. She persuaded herself that the premature death of lord Melbourne was a judgment from Heaven, to punish her for the deception of which she had been guilty; the horrors of self-reproach, added to the weight of grief she felt for this adored husband, almost overpowered her reason, and nearly proved too much for her weak frame: the sight of the sweet child alone had power to draw her from the stupor into which she had sunk; and she considered how doubly now it became her duty to attend to the welfare of the young Alieia. She had no friend on earth beside herself; and having now trained her in the school of affluence, it would be barbarous to let her experience any reverse; beside, she really entertained the most lively affection for the

child, and to have parted from her would have cost her much sorrow; she therefore resolved that the secret of her birth should never be known to any one; and that she should inherit all her immense wealth. . . .

Lady Melbourne now looked upon Melbourne House as the spot which had robbed her of every happiness, and she resolved to change the scene, and in the bustle of the metropolis endeavour to banish the remembrance of her woes. Ordering every thing to be left in its exact state, her ladyship appointed Mrs. Lloyd to remain as housekeeper, and with her young charge repaired to London. Here she engaged an elegant house, and appointed an accomplished lady as governess to the young Alicia. Her motive for residing in the metropolis was, that it was at a distance from the town of —, where the woman had said she had stolen the child; and she thought that in the bustle and gaiety of London she was more likely to pass unobserved than in a coun-

try village, where every one is eager to dive into your whole history.

Years passed on, and lady Alicia ripened into womanhood, adorned with every grace and accomplishment that could render her lovely; her heart was good and affectionate, and she perfectly idolized her supposed mother. She knew no care; every wish was gratified, and she was the admiration of all companies. Among the many who aspired to the happiness of gaining her heart was lord Athlyn, a young nobleman of a most exemplary character; his tender assiduities won upon her esteem, and her affections were soon his own.

Lady Melbourne could not refuse an offer so every way calculated to ensure the happiness of her dear Alicia; and though she felt how severe a pang it would be to part with this child of her love, yet she thought it would be a cruelty to throw any obstacle in the way of an union so founded upon reason and virtue.

Lady Alicia, however, was in no haste

to yield her liberty; she felt it would cost her much to separate from her beloved mother, whose declining and weak state of health made her attentions necessary; and most truly did lady Alicia fulfil the duties of a child towards an affectionate and indulgent parent.

It will be almost superfluous to add, that it was her ladyship whom Rosa had beheld in the Bank of England; and again descending from her carriage in — street, at the moment of our heroine's distress. Lady Alicia not having any knowledge of her, did not, of course, notice her, and little suspected the agony she was causing to an individual.

At length, after a long courtship, lord Athlyn grew impatient to call her his own, and neither lady Melbourne or her daughter could make any farther excuse for delay; and as soon as the necessary preliminaries could be gone through, lord Athlyn led his lovely bride to the altar.

Lady Melbourne was truly generous and liberal towards her on this occasion;

and no suspicion could possibly be raised as to the inheritance and birth of lady Alicia.

Little more remains to be said: lord Athlyn had estates in Wales, which required his presence, where he wished also to take his lady, who prevailed on lady Melbourne to repair also to Melbourne House. This wish cost her ladyship much pain; but as it was the only alternative to prevent a separation, she agreed to accompany them, and accordingly gave instructions to Mrs. Lloyd to have the house put into complete repair, and fitted up in a style fit for their reception.

Lady Athlyn was all joy and gaiety; her pure and innocent heart knew no guile, consequently the pang of self-reproach could not prey upon her mind: happy in the affections of a doting husband, and still blessed with the society of her mother, she was the happiest of her sex. Not so poor lady Melbourne; on entering the ancient edifice, her feelings

overcame her; it was here she had lost her beloved partner, and every object reminded her of his loss; her bosom was agitated with terror, lest any thing should occur to discover the birth of lady Alicia; and when Mrs. Lloyd, on first being introduced to her ladyship, declared she must have seen her before, as her face was quite familiar to her, poor lady Melbourne trembled with emotion, as she recollected the woman who had stolen her having mentioned the twin sister who had so greatly resembled her, and her terror was excessive, lest this circumstance should discover her to her family. She would have immediately left Wales, could she have acted as she wished; but to effect this was now impossible, as she could not assign any reason; and she remained between hope and fear, and little supposed, that by renewing her friendship with lady Editha Llewellyn, she was forming the very means of bringing about the dreaded discovery.

During the above confession, given by



lady Melbourne, the agitation of lady Athlyn was excessive; for the first time she felt grief at her heart: but that sorrow was ameliorated by the conviction of having obtained a sister; and that heart which had hitherto been only divided between lady Melbourne and her lord, now expanded with fresh affection towards this new-found relative; so true it is that the Almighty Giver of all goodness has endowed us with hearts and minds capable of cherishing the divine and almost heavenly sensations of love, to those who are bound to us by the ties of blood or affinity of soul.

Lord Athlyn felt for the situation of his beloved wife, and endeavoured, by the most fond attentions, to compose her sorrows, and to assure her that this discovery respecting her birth could not tend in the least degree to alter his affection; nor had she, he considered, any occasion for regret, since she had gained so charming a sister, who must, he added, be every way lovely, being so much the counterpart of his Alicia.

Lady Charlotte returned his compliment with the grace so inherent to her character, while his lordship also extending his hand towards Mr. Montague, begged for his regard, under the relationship in which they now stood.

Mr. Montague readily assured him of his brotherly esteem, and the ladies began to feel more composed: lady Melbourne was endeavouring to rally her spirits.—  
—“To your lordship,” said she, addressing lord Athlyn, “I feel some apology is due for the deception I have practised on you; but if you will pardon that, you shall have no other reason to complain. Your lady has hitherto passed to the world as my daughter—none but our own circle of friends need ever know to the contrary; and here I now avow, in the presence of all, that she is whole and sole heiress to all my possessions; therefore, lord Athlyn, receive her to your heart, and be assured you are in the possession of one of the best of women, for never did child pay more adoration to a mother than she has

done to me ; and when I rest in the peaceful grave, may she live long to enjoy that wealth, which it is my pride and joy to leave her."

" My dearest, dearest mamma," said lady Athlyn, throwing herself into her arms, " how doubly grateful do I feel to you for all your goodness ! it shall still be my greatest felicity to administer to your comforts and happiness ; and if you will yet allow me to call you by the name of mother, I shall with joy remain your affectionate child."

Lady Melbourne pressed her to her heart with maternal fondness, and shed tears over this object of her affection. The unexpected discovery which had taken place had strangely altered the proceedings of the day : lady Editha politely begged all to feel at their ease, and to make themselves at home ; and patiently listened to all the particulars as related by lady Melbourne.

The day, however, wore quick away, and Rosa was not sorry when at length

the carriages were announced; sir Owen had taken every opportunity of addressing her; but owing to the confusion which had arisen, nothing particular had transpired between them. Lady Editha seemed much attached to Rosa, and on parting, whispered in her ear that she should expect she would give her as much of her society as possible; and that now lady Charlotte had found her sister, her time would of course be partly engaged with her, therefore Rosa would be more able to steal from her ladyship, and repair to Llewellyn Castle.

Rosa respectfully thanked this amiable lady, and sighed to think that there was a barrier to her accepting an invitation which would have given her so much pleasure; for short as had been her acquaintance with lady Editha, she felt an indescribable sensation of respect and esteem towards her; and gladly would she have spent a portion of her time with her, had she not feared by so doing she was giving encouragement, and feeding the

passion of sir Owen, whom prudence whispered she must shun.

The ladies Alicia, or more properly Julia, and Charlotte, took an affectionate leave, promising to see each other early on the following day; and before lady Charlotte could have expected it, the warm-hearted lady Athlyn was at her side. Lady Melbourne, she said, was now much more composed, and even rejoiced, at the discovery which had taken place, as it had eased her mind of a burden which had long oppressed it; and lady Athlyn once more restored to her usual spirits, was all joy and happiness; and the sweetest intercourse appeared to subsist between these amiable though long-separated sisters.

Happy favourites of fortune! long may you remain united in the strictest bonds of amity and love! Both possessing the most ardent imaginations and congeniality of sentiment, alike in minds as in persons, they could not fail of being a joy to each

other; and both lord Athlyn and Mr. Montague had reason to bless the hour in which they had been united to these all-lovely and accomplished twin sisters.

### CHAPTER XIII.

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It will now be necessary to turn the attention of our readers towards lord Darlington, of whom we have not lately made mention. It has already been stated that his son, the young, elegant, and accomplished Hubert Grenville, had been absent from his native country some time—the request of his father, from reasons of a *private* nature, had been his inducement, and not from his own inclination; and on lord Darlington becoming the guardian of the honourable Miss Dashley, he immediately formed in his own mind the determination of uniting them in marriage, although he well knew that there were



obstacles in the way to such an alliance, which almost seemed impossible to surmount; but his lordship was not a man to stop at trifles to obtain his end, and the large fortune of Miss Dashley was a sufficient stimulus to him to persevere in his unworthy designs; how then was he enraged and mortified, on writing to his son to that effect, to receive an answer from an agent, that Mr. Hubert Grenville had left the country, and was gone no one knew whither, after having placed the affairs of his father in proper hands! It was in vain lord Darlington endeavoured to trace his steps—no tidings could be gained of him; and he dreaded lest the large prize should be lost to his family, particularly as he saw that Miss Dashley rather encouraged the attentions of Mr. Lorimer than otherwise.

On coming into possession of his title, his ambition increased, and he then wrote to Mr. Dashley, to propose an alliance between his son and Miss Dashley, assuring him that it was the mutual wish of all



parties. This violation of truth was nothing to the bosom of his lordship, who had already laid down plans for the accomplishment of his designs, and he doubted not his ultimate success.

By the first ship he received for answer that Mr. Dashley would feel proud of the honour of his son's alliance, provided it met with the approbation of his daughter; but recommended that the treaty of marriage should remain unfulfilled until his arrival on his native shore, when he should be able to ascertain how far his daughter's inclinations coincided with their wishes.

In consequence of this acquiescence, lord Darlington had so peremptorily refused Mr. Lorimer when he applied to him for permission to address Miss Dashley: but notwithstanding all his policy, his schemes did not seem likely to succeed, on account of the mysterious absence of his son: one more effort he resolved to make—to set out in quest of Hubert himself; and for this purpose he repaired to Holland, at which place Hubert had been stationed;

but on arriving there, he had only the mortification of hearing that Mr. Grenville had left the place, and was gone no one knew whither.

He traced him wherever the least clue led him to suppose that he might find him, but all to no purpose; and he returned to his native land, as unsuccessful as when he left it. It was on his return that the letter of Rosa met his eye, which she had sent him to inform him of the cruel conduct of Mrs. Powell, and which, of course, he had not received at the time. He was enraged almost to madness at the perusal of this letter; his schemes were again defeated, and Rosa escaped from his power. Composing himself as much as he possibly could, he repaired to the house of Mrs. Harrison, where he thought it was probable he might gain some intelligence concerning her. Nor was he disappointed, although his inward rage was excessive, when Miss Dashley informed him of lady Charlotte having taken her and her infant under her protection. He,

however, with his usual policy, endeavoured to receive the intelligence with composure. One point he had at least gained—the knowledge of where she was, and he instantly resolved the measures he should adopt. All his hopes seemed now to rest on airy fabrics.

Mr. Lorimer continued to pay court to Miss Dashley; and lord Darlington peremptorily informed his ward, that as he now expected the return of her father, he should insist on such a connexion being broken off, as he knew Mr. Dashley had wished another way.

Miss Dashley received the commands with her usual haughty demeanour, and how far she respected them remains to be seen. No one but herself now seemed inclined to think of Rosa with indignation; the other ladies who resided with Mrs. Harrison were strangers to the story of her supposed errors; and Mrs. Harrison was now too happy in the turn which her own affairs had taken, to cherish unfavourable sentiments; and since the candid

declaration which lady Charlotte Montague had made of having taken Rosa under her protection, she had reflected that a lady of her unsullied character and reputation would not have committed herself by associating with an unworthy object. This, and the persuasion of Charles Horace, had operated upon her mind, and she began to remember our heroine with sentiments of more liberality, and pity for her sufferings.

The fair Emily was now the happy bride of the young clergyman. After his declaration to Emily, he had taken the first opportunity of soliciting the consent of Mrs. Harrison, which was joyfully given on her part, as there existed not a man on earth whom she would have so gladly received for her son-in-law. Charles was therefore received as the acknowledged lover of her daughter, much to the annoyance of sir Philip Horton, who pressed his suit with perseverance. The refusal of Emily was however too firm and decided ever to admit of hope; and

the rejected lover was obliged to absent himself from the house of his fair enslaver, until time should wear away the pain he really felt at this disappointment. No obstacles being in the way, a speedy union took place between Mr. Horace and Emily, which alliance seemed formed on the solid basis of reason and virtue. Ever since the former had been convinced that Rosa was lost to him, he had with fortitude and a sense of religion, endeavoured to overcome the sharpness of his disappointment; and though he had greatly loved her, yet, when lady Charlotte acknowledged to him that she was really married, he was too much a Christian to cherish a passion which his reason and nice sense of honour pointed out to him as criminal.

With the state of Emily's heart our readers have long been acquainted, and now that the glow of health again adorned her cheek, she looked unresistingly lovely, and, in her husband's eyes, appeared to greater advantage than ever. No longer

restrained by unrequited love, her eyes beamed with tenderness on her beloved Charles; and as he read the language which glowed in them, he wondered how he had been so long insensible to such modest worth. After their union, which was celebrated in town, the happy pair retired for a few weeks to enjoy the pure breezes of the country air. They fixed on the beautiful and romantic village of L——, near which place Mr. Horace had relatives, to whom he wished to introduce his bride, and who received her with much pleasure, as indeed her gentle and amiable manners could not fail of pleasing all who were blest with her society.

One curious circumstance marked their excursion. Rambling one lovely evening over some delightful fields, they passed a neat white cottage—it had a pretty flower garden in front, and stood on a gentle declivity; an arbour was erected to shade its inhabitants from the heat of the sun, over which the lilacs and liburnum hung



with grace and elegance, affording the sweetest contrast imaginable. They paused to view this tranquil spot, when immediately a sentence broke upon their ear, and which, from the theatrical manner in which it was expressed, attracted their attention; it evidently issued from the arbour, where, no doubt, some one was seated, reading, the subject being that of Thomson.

“ At length the finished garden to the view  
Its vistas opens, and its alleys green,  
Snatch'd through the verdant maze, the hurried eye  
Distracted wanders. — — —

— — — At hand,  
Along these blushing borders bright with dew,  
And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,  
Fair handed Spring unbosoms every grace.”

“ Sure I should know that voice !” exclaimed Emily.

“ I think so too,” said Mr. Horace, with a smile ; “ it is not easily to be mistaken.”

At that instant a lady, dressed in pure white drapery, issued from the arbour, and revealed to her astonished gazers the form of Miss Monimia Beauville. Her



eye at the same instant met theirs; uttering almost a shriek expressive of her surprise, she advanced with extended hands towards them.

Mr. Horace felt somewhat embarrassed at her presence, after the unequivocal sentiments she had expressed for him, and the reason she had assigned for leaving Mrs. Harrison; while, on her part, she betrayed no symptoms of confusion whatever.—“ Miss Harrison and Mr. Horace !” she cried, “ who in the name of wonder could have expected to see you two here ? But I suppose the Bloomsbury party have made a little excursion this summer ?”

“ No, madam,” said Mr. Horace, “ we are at present alone : give me leave,” added he, taking the hand of Emily, “ to present Mrs. Horace to you, whom I trust you will be glad to see, being so old a friend.”

“ Mrs. Horace !” re-echoed she ; “ you do indeed surprise me ! But you know, my sweet friend, I always entertained the warmest affection for you ; and this meet-

ing affords me the highest pleasure. But pray walk in," continued she, opening the garden gate; "this is a most delightful arbour, and will afford you shelter from the sun: it is here I repair to study the works of nature—it is here, free from the busy scenes of life, that I can indulge in my favourite pursuit; and as I contemplate the surrounding scenery, I often exclaim with Milton—

"These are thy glorious works, parent of good."

Emily and Mr. Horace cast an expressive glance at each other, as they beheld the same romantic being before them as ever; and following her into the arbour, they saw a table, on which was placed the portable desk, papers, and manuscripts, which used to grace the drawing-room of Mrs. Harrison.—"But how," inquired she, "how is all this come about? You have a little surprised me, I must confess, Mr. Horace. I think I may say, in the words of our immortal Shakespeare—

“What a change is here !

Is she whom thou didst love so dear

So soon forgot? Young men’s love then lies,

Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.”

Emily looked agitated at this rather ill-timed inquiry; while Mr. Horace, somewhat embarrassed, endeavoured to smile, and gaily replied—“Not always in our eyes, madam, or I might not have been so insensible to the charms of other ladies; and knowing that you possess a heart replete with generosity and good nature, you will banish all past trifling dissensions, and wish me joy of the treasure I possess.”

“That I most certainly do,” she returned; “and as to all that is past, be assured it is long since buried in oblivion; I allude to my feelings towards yourself, which I am not ashamed of acknowledging; for I might say with Hamlet—

‘Thou art e’en just such a man,

As e’er my conversation cop’d withal;

Nay, do not think I flatter,

For what advancement may I hope from thee?”

“To be plain, Mr. Horace, I can now be-

hold you with pleasure, being myself the wife of another."

"Indeed!" said Emily, as glancing her eye towards her left hand, she beheld the magic circle which adorned her finger.

"This intelligence gives me great pleasure, dear madam," replied Mr. Horace, "and most truly do I offer you my congratulations and wishes for your happiness."

"Oh yes, I am truly happy," she exclaimed, at the same time bursting into tears, which she vainly endeavoured to chase away.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Horace looked their surprise—"I have heard, and indeed experienced," said the latter, "that tears will flow from joy as well as sorrow, and I trust that it is thus with you."

"Oh yes, my sweet friend," replied the lady, "it is indeed as you judge; you know my feelings were always particularly warm and alive to every soft sensation; it is the indisposition of my beloved Rosenberg that causes me sorrow in this terres-

trial paradise, for here I reign mistress of his affections."

Finding that she was still the same romantic being as ever, they indulged her in her flights, and sympathized with her in the illness of Mr. Rosenberg, about whom they made the necessary inquiries.

"Ah, my friends," she replied, "I never knew him otherwise, though I now fear that his indisposition increases; but probably for the circumstance of his ill health, I should never have been his wife; there is something so irresistible in the languor which attends a sick friend, it interests one's feelings, and affords the highest gratification to the heart—it awakens a pity within your bosom, which rude and unfeeling health cannot excite; but I will relate the particulars, and you will then acknowledge the force of congeniality of sentiment; for Mr. Rosenberg and I were desperately in love with each other, and on the point of marriage, without ever having had an interview."

"Indeed!" re-echoed both her auditors

in astonishment, as well they might at such a declaration—"that was a strange event indeed."

"Not at all," replied Mrs. Rosenberg, drawing herself up with dignity; "our minds were united, the principal and chief basis on which happiness is formed, and thus it is with us."

The simple fact was this; Miss Monimia had long been in the habit of sending many of her little effusions of poetry to a periodical miscellany, and as the subject was chiefly on love, and romantic to the extreme, it caught the attention of an author as romantic as herself, and he answered her verses in the most lively strains, amounting to a declaration of love for the fair lady. The signature was that of Albert, and whether it was real or fictitious, it sounded very musical in her ear: for some few months a correspondence was kept up between the unknown parties, and Miss Monimia began to wish for a sight of this inspired lover, for whom she now conceived a violent passion. Her hopes

were soon realized, by a copy of verses which now presented themselves to her eye, which she perused with eager delight, and which were as follows:—

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Oh come, Monimia, lovely maid !  
And share with me the rural shade,  
Where peaceful vales their joys impart,  
And give soft pleasure to the heart.

Within my cot no pomp you'll find,  
No glittering gems to tempt mankind ;  
No wealth or splendour, no ornament,  
Excepting that of sweet content.

Thus calm I pass my peaceful hours,  
Nor envy those of greater powers ;  
And though oppress'd with pain I lie,  
Still calm I live, and so will die.

Yet oh ! wouldst thou, my lovely fair,  
With me the pangs of sickness share,  
A ray of bliss would on me shine,  
As gazing on thine eye divine.

My fancy paints thee bright and fair,  
Pure as Heaven's own angels are ;  
Then let me clasp thee to my heart,  
Never, never more to part !



**170      RUINS OF RUTHVALE ABBEY.**

And wilt thou, dearest, love so true,  
Through perils keen with me to go ?  
Say, wilt thou quit thy native shore,  
And never wish to see it more ?

Oh yes, thou wilt ; thou'lt grant my prayer,  
And to thine Albert's arms repair ;  
Oh, let me but behold that form,  
Which fancy pictures blest with every charm !

Then come, Monimia, lovely maid,  
And share with me the rural shade ;  
Hearts like ours ne'er should sever,  
Then let me call thee mine for ever !

ALBERT.

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This effusion was accompanied also by a request from the author to be favoured with the address' of the lady in question, to be left for him at the publisher's.

This wish was immediately complied with, and in a short time Miss Monimia received a letter by post from her inamorato, in which he stated himself to be a Swede by birth, of good fortune ; that it was his intention to return to his native land as soon as his health would permit ; but being in a very declining state at pre-

sent, he had fixed his abode in a cottage at L——, whither he begged Miss Monimia to visit him; that it had long been his wish to meet with a lady with whom he could unite in marriage, and he flattered himself that he had at length found a congenial mind; but if she would have the generosity to favour him with an interview, they should be better able to judge.

Miss Monimia was highly flattered with this letter; it was something so romantic, and so much more congenial to her feelings than the regular mode of courtship, and she hesitated not in complying with the request of Mr. Rosenberg, for such was the name which he had signed; and this also possessed a charm, being so romantically sweet: in short, she honoured Mr. Rosenberg with a visit; and though she was somewhat shocked to find that he was evidently declining, still his person was agreeable, and, for a foreigner, spoke very good English; she was also pleased to find him in the prime of life, being not

more than thirty-five. He received her with much politeness, and desired his housekeeper to shew her every attention; with the cottage she was also delighted; and she finally agreed in a short time to become its mistress.

Mr. Rosenberg was pleased with the figure of Miss Monimia, and being as romantic as herself, their dispositions assimilated. For the sake of propriety, she did not again visit him until she met him at the altar; but, till that period, letters passed between them, as full of rhapsody and affection as if they had known each other for years. It was true, she secretly regretted his ill state of health; but if she refused this offer, she might never have another, as she was fast verging on the age of thirty. With Mr. Horace she knew she had no chance, and she resolved to banish him from her remembrance; and at the time appointed she became Mrs. Rosenberg.

She had been married a few months, when Mr. and Mrs. Horace so accidentally

met with her; and her happiness would have been complete, if the health of her husband had not been so impaired; for, notwithstanding her boast with regard to the pleasures of ill health, yet she acknowledged to her own heart, that though sickness may be very interesting for a short time, a procrastination of it becomes very irksome, both to the invalid, and those about. Mr. Rosenberg was however pleased with his wife, and indulged her in all her flights of fancy; and she reigned mistress of her little paradise, as she termed it.

This account she delivered to Emily and Mr. Horace, who again congratulated her on her choice, and were preparing to take their leave, but she begged they would permit her to introduce them to her husband, who was in the parlour. They followed her into the house, which they found was fitted up with taste and elegance.

Mr. Rosenberg was reclining on a sofa, and looked extremely ill; his manners

were however polite and pleasing ; and on Mrs. Rosenberg introducing “ her two most particular friends,” he received them with every possible mark of respect ; lamented his ill state of health, which would not permit him to entertain them with that cheerfulness he should wish ; but desired his beloved Monimia to place every refreshment before their guests which their cottage afforded. This both Mr. and Mrs. Horace declined ; and after passing half an hour in agreeable conversation with Mr. Rosenberg, who was really very conversant, they took their leaves. Mrs. Rosenberg begged they would favour her with another call before they left L—— ; and declared she was quite happy in having seen them.

On their return home, Mr. Horace could not forbear from remarking on the strange marriage of the fair authoress ; but added his fears that a short time would consign her husband to the tomb, for the interesting Rosenberg was too evidently in a decline, although it was im-

possible for human power to number his days upon earth, and poor Monimia was no doubt destined to become, at some future period, a sorrowing widow.

The mournful cypress, alas ! will wave  
O'er Monimia's widow'd brow ;  
And amidst the place of graves  
Her tears are doom'd to flow.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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WITH the permission of her husband, Emily wrote to lady Charlotte Montague and to Rosa, in a joint letter, giving them an account of her marriage, and of the above events which we have recorded; and if any thing could give pleasure to the sorrowing bosom of our heroine, that event afforded her the highest satisfaction; a weight seemed relieved from her heart by the union of Mr. Horace, who, of course, was now no longer unhappy about

her. Lady Charlotte rejoiced in the felicity of her friend Emily, and could not forbear smiling at the account of their meeting with Mrs. Rosenberg, whose romantic marriage was just what might have been expected from her. Emily had also slightly touched upon the subject of lord Darlington, and his inquiries respecting Rosa; this caused fresh alarm to the bosom of our heroine, whose terror of him was so great, that only his knowledge of her place of residence filled her with dread.

Lady Charlotte kindly endeavoured to dissipate all her fears, and assured her of her protection against all his machinations; and as she was now removed so great a distance, she was surely safe from his persecutions. Notwithstanding the restoration of her dear twin sister, lady Charlotte bestowed the same attention and portion of her time to Rosa as ever. Lady Athlyn became as much attached to her as her sister; and curious were the mistakes which were occasioned in their intercourse

together, as they could scarcely be known apart by their nearest friends.

The warmest reception was given to Mr. Montague and his lady by lady Melbourne, at her house, and the effects of the agitation produced on her mind was fast subsiding; while the amiable lady Athlyn strove, by every attention in her power, to chase away disagreeable reflections in her bosom, in which she was assisted by her lord, who was also truly exemplary in his conduct towards the unhappy lady.

On the first visit of lady Charlotte to Melbourne House, poor old Mrs. Lloyd had been absolutely *struck*, as she expressed herself, with surprise; for having just attended on lady Athlyn in the drawing-room, she could not conceive how it was possible she should be *descending* from the carriage as she was crossing the hall. To her the mystery was explained; and she now accounted for having been so familiar to the features of lady Athlyn on her arrival in Wales; when lady Charlotte

reminded her of her visit with Rosa to the house, and took the opportunity of repeating her thanks for the civilities they received from the worthy old housekeeper.

Lady Melbourne politely extended her invitations to Rosa, who felt obliged, out of compliment to lady Charlotte, to accept them ; and thus she was forced into society, which, in her sorrowing state, she would have avoided ; but the most urgent reason was, that there sir Owen also visited, and their meetings became very frequent, through one channel or another.

Sir Owen seemed to live but in her presence, and sought every opportunity of whispering his attachment in her ear ; his passion was too ardent to be discouraged by her repulses, which she gave in the most delicate way possible. She wished not to grieve him, but encourage him she could not ; and at length he addressed her in terms which demanded an answer. He had, he said, the full consent of lady Editha in offering her his hand and heart ; who had also conceived such an affection

for her, that she would be proud to receive her as her daughter.

The distress of Rosa may be conceived at such an unequivocal declaration. The tears chased each other down her cheek as she endeavoured to reject his addresses; the task was indeed a most painful one. She respected, and even *esteemed* sir Owen more than she had ever done any of his sex, *save one*, and that *one* was to her the whole world ! For sir Owen, she thought she cherished the regard of a brother, and would gladly have transformed herself into some near relative, when, free from the passion of love, she might have esteemed him with a purity of affection, unalloyed with "passion's sway," where "hearts melt, but melt like ice." "True love strikes root in reason," says the poet, and her reason assured her that sir Owen was worthy her esteem. How painful then to inflict so much unhappiness on one whom she so greatly respected ! but stern necessity compelled her to reject with firmness his offer : the despair of his countenance, his

undisguised grief, alarmed her; and she sought, by every argument in her power, to persuade him to conquer the unhappy passion which he had cherished for her.

“Impossible!” was his reply; “I cannot overcome it. Who can listen to the fascination of that tongue without adoring the lovely speaker? for while you forbid my hopes, love, almighty love, reigns in your eyes, and impels me to urge my suit with double ardour! Dearest Rosa, condemn me not to utter despair! I cannot forego the hopes I have so long cherished. From our first accidental meeting, I was charmed with that ease and elegance of figure which distinguishes you; and when chance again favoured my wishes by my fortunate introduction to you, I thought myself the happiest of beings; for in that soft, that intelligent countenance, I read a language of tenderness, which I vainly hoped might one day be bestowed on me. Respect for your situation kept me silent at first; for worlds I would not offend your delicacy, or hasten you into an union

at an earlier period than would meet your own virtuous ideas : only say at some future period you will give me leave to address you, and I will rest at peace, and wait your own time."

" Sir Owen," replied Rosa, in great agitation, " you know not how much you distress me by this language. I cannot, dare not listen to it. If my respect, my sincerest friendship, would be acceptable to you, it is yours ; but I have no heart to bestow. Since the cruel loss I have sustained," added she, in a voice broken with emotion, " in an adored husband, my affections have been buried with my hopes, nor can they ever be another's. I have many, many reasons to forbid my ever thinking of any other ; and be assured, sir Owen, there exists no being on earth who could have power to shake my resolutions. I say this much, to convince you that I am not guided by caprice in my refusal, since no one could stand higher in my estimation than yourself ; and while I repeat my thanks for your generous offer, I must re-

quest you will never more repeat it, since it can only be productive of distress to both of us."

"Oh, no, no—not to both," repeated sir Owen, passionately. "It cannot distress you; your heart is not agonized as mine; you do not feel the pangs of disappointed love; it is I alone who am doomed to misery and despair."

"Sir Owen," said Rosa, in a calmer tone, "it is impossible for us to judge the hearts of others. In this moment of disappointment you imagine your griefs are beyond all others, but did you know the real sorrows which encompass *me*, you would not talk thus, or add to my woes by language like the present. Blighted in my prospects of happiness in the early days of youth, I have relinquished the false glare of the world; I wish to devote myself to solitude, and pass the remainder of my days in calm seclusion, until it shall please my Maker to call me to that pure abode, 'where the wicked cease from persecuting, and the weary are at rest.'"

" Oh, yet live for me !" said sir Owen, taking her reluctant hand, " and forgive my mad, my impetuous language. I adore you for the very constancy which destroys my hopes, since it still farther shews me the value of that heart, which I would give worlds to possess. But, dearest Rosa, forgive me when I say you have not only yourself to live for—you have a child, who, like yourself, deprived of its best protector on earth, stands defenceless amidst the thousand temptations to which her sex is exposed: beautiful as an angel, she already promises the singular loveliness of her mother; who then shall guard her safe through this dangerous labyrinth? She will, no doubt, possess your virtues; you will inculcate the bright precepts of religion and morality within her bosom, but you cannot steel her breast against the insidious snares of love. Oh say, in such a moment, when surrounded by danger, would not the voice of *a father* be acceptable, to guide and direct her steps? Oh, give me the right to become that *parent*, and let us

together assist in the sweet task of forming the dawning mind of your lovely infant!"

"Desist, sir Owen," cried Rosa, while tears almost choked her utterance; "you wound me to the soul. To that Almighty Being, who promises to be a father to the fatherless, I must commit the safety of my beloved child, since, I repeat, it is impossible for any being in existence to supply the place of that protector she has lost: and now, if you value my peace of mind, do not renew this fatal subject; banish me from your remembrance—avoid me, and leave me to that sorrow which must ever be my companion on earth."

"Cruel to yourself and me," he interrupted, "young, lovely, and formed to ensure the happiness of man, and thus to devote yourself to unavailing grief! But I will no longer urge you on this score of love. That bosom, which beams with such angelic tenderness, which has often prompted the tear to fall from your eye in compassion to the wo of others, cannot

be insensible to the soft gem of pity; on that I throw myself; grant me that precious boon, and in time I will still cherish the idea it may be changed to a warmer sentiment."

"Sir Owen," said Rosa, endeavouring to assume a tone of firmness, "I should be sorry to put such an affront upon your understanding as to say I pity you; can the heir of Llewellyn thus forget his high birth, his rank, and fortune, as thus to sue for the pity of a poor unknown being like myself? Oh, sir Owen, recollect yourself! I cannot bear the humiliating idea. I feel lady Editha would despise me, for thus being the means of making her son forget his dignity."

"You both wrong and mistake my mother," interrupted sir Owen. "She knows and approves my choice; experience has taught her the power of love; nor does she forget that in the days of her youth, she sacrificed all for the object of her affections; she, like *you*, *claims England* for her birthplace, but ever since her

union with my father, residing constantly in Wales, she is universally believed to be a native of this place ; she therefore hails you as her countrywoman, and would with pleasure receive you as her daughter."

Rosa felt some little surprise at this information, as, in common with others, she had supposed Wales to have been the birthplace of lady Editha ; and a train of reflections crossed her mind, which she however banished as improbable.

Sir Owen watched every turn of her expressive countenance with the closest scrutiny, hoping to catch something in his favour ; but she continued so firm in her refusal, that he was compelled to bid adieu to the hope which he had vainly cherished. In an agony of grief he caught her hand, and pressed it to his lips ; and then hastily relinquishing it, he broke from her, and rushed out of the house in a state of mind bordering upon madness.

CHAPTER XV.

ON leaving Rosewood Hall, sir Owen took a contrary direction to that of Llewellyn Castle; he could not meet his mother in his present wretched state of mind, and he continued wandering along the banks of the Clwyd, until he reached the retired lane which led to the beautiful cottage of Mr. Hastings. With this gentleman sir Owen had accidentally met in his rambles, and a congeniality of sentiment and gentleman-like manners had formed an acquaintance between them, which promised to ripen into a lasting friendship. Sir Owen had been admitted into the house of Mr. Hastings, a favour which had not been granted to any one else, owing to the seclusion in which he lived; but in vain had sir Owen entreated his new friend to return his visit at the castle;

Mr. Hastings confessed candidly that he wished to shun all society, and sir Owen was obliged to be content with the exclusive permission given him of visiting at the cottage; for notwithstanding the mystery and the melancholy which surrounded him, sir Owen valued his friendship, as he discerned the many amiable qualifications with which he was endowed: such a companion as this now seemed suitable to the present feelings of sir Owen, and he entered the beautiful habitation of his melancholy friend. The housekeeper informed him that her master was in his garden, and thither sir Owen repaired. He soon discovered Mr. Hastings sitting under his favourite cypress, in a reclining posture; a book was in his hand, but his eyes evidently beamed on vacancy, or turned to the thoughts within his own bosom.

Sir Owen gazed silently on him for a few minutes, hardly daring to disturb him from the profound reverie in which he seemed absorbed; his fine form was wasting beneath the weight of sorrow with

which his mind was oppressed; his black and sparkling eyes, which seemed as intended by nature to sparkle with vivacity, were now bent in sad and mournful expression to the earth, and in the words of Gray, "Melancholy had mark'd him for her own."

"What," thought sir Owen, "can have reduced a man of his accomplishments and sense to such a state as this? Sin and sorrow are inseparable companions; but surely sin can have no influence o'er such a form as that.

'Inglorious bondage! Human nature groans
Beneath a vassalage so vile and cruel.

— — — — —
What havock hast thou made, foul monster, sin,
Greatest and first of ills— — —
— — — — — But for thee
Sorrow had never been*.'

I wrong him by such a thought," mentally reflected sir Owen. "Am I not at this moment reduced to as mournful a state as himself? Could I not forget the firmness of my sex, and with him weep

* Blair.

over the sorrows which now oppress me? woes which have not arisen from a sense of guilt, but from love unreturned? Oh yes; now plainly do I understand the nature of his griefs: it is love, unrequited love, which has caused this havock, and overthrown his mind. Welcome, then, thrice welcome now to me such a friend: we will sympathize together, and share each other's grief."

Sir Owen advanced to Mr. Hastings, apologizing for his intrusion on his privacy.

"Sir Owen cannot intrude," he replied, extending his hand towards him, and endeavouring to force a smile into his expressive countenance; "I would not allow the visits of any one who would be deemed as an intruder: the gay world would shun a man of my retired habits, while I equally despise their society; you, dear sir Owen, have proved the only exception to the opinion I have entertained, and your visits are esteemed by me, and duly appreciated."

"I feel proud of the distinction," re-

plied sir Owen, "and am sensible of the vast boon you have bestowed, in granting me a portion of your friendship. Within your peaceful walls I feel freed from the busy scenes of life; in this delightful solitude I could now pass the remainder of my days with you, shunning all society, and avoiding my fellow-men."

"Oh, say not so," interrupted Mr. Hastings; "the mind that can make such a sacrifice as that, must have been torn with contending passions, and the bosom lacerated with ills of no common nature: when the heart is bursting with agony—when mankind has betrayed us, and we become disgusted with life, then it is easy to relinquish its false pursuits; but not till we feel all this can we abandon the world, to which we are all too steadily attached. You, who have hitherto worn a countenance of content, cannot have experienced all this; therefore why express such a wish, as to shun that society which you are formed to grace?"

"How is it," inquired sir Owen, "that

you thus condemn the conduct to which you have resorted?"

A momentary colour suffused the cheek of the stranger, as in a voice of deep agitation he replied—"Because I have *felt all* I have been describing. Think you that in youth's early days, when fortune smiled upon me, and prospects shone brilliantly around, that I ever anticipated such a life as this? Ah no! not till disappointments of the keenest nature assailed me—not till my honour was wounded in its dearest hopes—could I have relinquished all; but when I found that mankind smiled on me but to betray—when all was torn from me which rendered life dear, where then could I fly for consolation? Not to my fellow-creatures, for they had deceived me. Solitude and myself were then my only refuge; they would not betray me; and here I find that peace 'which the world cannot give.' He paused, and endeavoured to dash away a tear, which obtruded itself upon his cheek.

Sir Owen was much affected; it was

the first time that Mr. Hastings had ever reverted to his own sorrows, and he felt grieved for his misfortunes.—“But,” said sir Owen, “suppose I acknowledge that sorrow has assailed me—that my hopes of happiness are for ever blighted—and that I stand in need of that consolation which a friend like yourself only can administer.”

“If my advice, my commiseration, or my assistance, can render you any service,” replied Mr. Hastings, “you may command them. Disgusted as I am with the world, I can easily imagine you may have met its contumely. Can I in any way assist you?”

“If you can persuade the woman I love almost to madness to listen to my suit,” replied sir Owen, “you would indeed bestow happiness on me. It is my unhappy fate to have fixed my affections on one who is cold to my vows, and who refuses my love with a firmness which no persuasions can conquer; I have this instant broke from her in despair, and

never more perhaps shall I behold that angelic form."

A smile, almost bordering upon contempt, arose upon the face of Mr. Hastings, as, looking sir Owen in the face, he exclaimed—"And is it possible that *love* is the cause of your unhappiness! Can *you* be so weak as to sigh at the feet of women? Oh, my friend, shun them—avoid them as you would the greatest evil; their smiles are but as the basilisk, made to deceive, and their tongues to utter what their hearts never yet felt; I would say with Goldsmith—

"For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex——"

for they are made of dissimulation and falsehood, and their beauty but a lure to the destruction of man."

"Amazement!" exclaimed sir Owen; "is it possible that you, who, I am sure, have been formed in nature's softest mould, can thus rail against the fairest of the creation? Woman—lovely woman! let

no man dare to offer profanation to thy bewitching sweetness. Insensible to all the finest feelings of the heart must be that man who can behold beauty unmoved; and I scruple not to aver, I cannot call him my friend, who dares to violate the sacred passion of love, by turning it into ridicule."

"You are warm, sir Owen," replied Mr. Hastings, in a mild tone; "your passions have not yet learnt to bear control: experience will teach you the truth of what I have asserted. You have probed my heart by your invectives; shall I, to regain your good opinion, acknowledge that that heart was once as weak as your own? I did once love—oh, Heaven! it was more than love—it was adoration—but enough—she *proved unworthy*, and I have banished her from my remembrance, and forgotten her and all the world. Forgotten her, did I say?" he repeated, in a tone of frenzy—"Oh no; she yet reigns triumphant—her image is ever present to

my eyes, and I glut on her charms in madness and despair." He threw himself down on the bench from which he had arisen, overcome by the violence of his grief.

Sir Owen took his hand.—“ Unhappy man !” he cried, “ this confession binds us in the sacred link of friendship for ever ; now can I forgive the severity of your expressions ; you have been deceived, and have a right to judge the sex as they have acted toward you ; but I have no grounds for complaint ; the fair I love is above disguise—beautiful as an angel, her voice is the breath of purity ; her only fault that she will not accept my addresses.”

Mr. Hastings, somewhat recovered, arose from his reclining posture.—“ You will think me mad,” he cried : “ I am ashamed of my weakness ; do not again renew the subject, if you value my peace. I cannot assist you in your sorrows ; Heaven knows I compassionate you ; but for your own sake, conquer this unhappy passion, if it is really hopeless : call your fortitude to

your aid while you possess the noble faculty of reason; for love will overturn that in time. Sheridan has asserted, that — ‘It is a tormenting fiend, whose influence, like the moon acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them; but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their cause, and urges sensibility to madness.’

“It is a just conclusion,” returned sir Owen; “nor do I wonder at the effects caused by love unreturned; but I will not wound you by a repetition of my sorrows; it is cruel of me to reopen those wounds which you are endeavouring to heal; only say you will allow me to pass much of my time in your peaceful retirement; we will read together, converse together, and endeavour to chase away each others sorrows.”

“All that friendship can afford, you may command,” replied Mr. Hastings. “When I retired to this secluded dwelling, I did not think that person existed who I would wish to have admitted within my walls: my accidental introduction to

you, however, proved that my breast is still open to friendship; your society has been the only source of indulgence I have hitherto allowed myself; and if you will still favour me with your visits, I shall deem it as a pleasure; and let me add the fervent hope that a little cool reflection, and the persuasions of a friend, who wishes you well, will enable you to overcome the unfortunate attachment you have imbibed."

Sir Owen sighed deeply; he promised to fortify his mind as much as possible, but he mentally feared he should never overcome the love he felt for his beautiful Rosa. After passing another hour with Mr. Hastings, he arose to depart, and promising to repeat his visit very shortly, he bent his steps in sad reflections towards Llewellyn Castle.

CHAPTER XVI.

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IF sir Owen was rendered wretched by the positive rejection of Rosa, she was no less unhappy than himself; ever since his unequivocal declaration, she had known no peace, as his image haunted her repose. She would have given the wealth of worlds, had she possessed them, to have restored him to happiness; and she considered herself born to disturb the repose of her fellow-creatures.—“Lady Editha will despise me,” she mentally reflected; “she will view me as the destroyer of her son; for ignorant of the serious reasons which I have to prevent my forming such an alliance, and which I dare not reveal, she will think it a contumaciousness on my part, and judge me as both ungrateful and insensible. Oh, whither shall I fly for peace?—even in this sequestered vale,

where I vainly flattered myself I might pass unmolested, fresh anxieties arise to disturb me. Poor sir Owen! would he might have allowed me to esteem him as a friend; then should I have sought his society with pleasure; but as it is, I must avoid him with studious care."

This resolution she endeavoured to keep; but when she accompanied lady Charlotte to her sister, lady Athlyn's, she sometimes met him there, and those meetings were truly embarrassing to both. The alteration in his person and manner—the despair and melancholy which beamed in his eyes, as he turned them on our heroine, struck a dagger to her heart; she could not bear to be the cause of so much unhappiness to so amiable a young man. Lady Editha, who was also there, chid her in terms of the utmost kindness for not visiting her at Llewellyn Castle—adding, that she was acting cruelly to those friends who sighed for her society.

The heart of Rosa was bursting; she took the hand of lady Editha, and respect-

fully pressed it to her lips, while the power of speech seemed denied her. Her ladyship appeared to read her thoughts, and kindly whispered her to be composed. The presence of others prevented any farther conversation, and Rosa soon afterwards departed with lady Charlotte.

On their arrival at home, Rosa confided to the bosom of that sincere friend the offer sir Owen had made her, and her consequent wish of endeavouring to avoid him as much as possible in future.

Lady Charlotte agreed as to the propriety of such conduct, adding, that absence would perhaps wear off the impression she had made on his heart.—“Poor sir Owen!” said her ladyship, “I am truly concerned for his unfortunate attachment, since I do not think it is merely the enthusiasm of the moment with him, but a steady and lasting affection. He is an amiable young man, and every way calculated to render such a female as yourself happy. I almost wish, my dear Rosa,

that you were at liberty to receive his addresses."

"Oh, no, no," interrupted Rosa; "do not, I conjure you, give utterance to such a wish. Rather would I endure all the misery which I now suffer, than for a moment believe myself to be free. Hope still clings to my heart, and whispers me that my beloved husband will yet return, and claim me for his own. Oh, what would I not endure for such a moment as that! to see him once more—to be assured of his safety, would be bliss almost too great! But, alas! my thoughts carry me too far—for even now he may be numbered with the dead, else why this mysterious absence—this distressing silence?"

"I cannot but believe that he is equally the victim of perfidy as well as yourself," replied lady Charlotte, "or depend upon it he would never thus leave you a prey to despair. Would I could persuade you openly to avow your wrongs, and claim your rights."

"I dare not," returned Rosa; "my

oath—the dreadful conditions, all arise before me, and drive me almost to madness. Oh no, still must I be silent, though the result be the sacrifice of my life.”

“ I cannot help thinking,” said lady Charlotte, endeavouring to turn the thoughts of her sorrowing friend from the recollection of her woes, “ that there is a great resemblance between sir Owen and yourself; your features are precisely the same; and, were I to predict your fate,” added she, smiling, “ I should certainly say, from this circumstance, that you were destined to come together, some day or other; who shall say what may yet happen?”

“ Do not jest on a subject which causes me such pain, I implore your ladyship: Sir Owen can never be more to me than he is at this moment; and I acknowledge I could esteem him as a friend, as I think him most amiable and agreeable.”

“ With such sentiments as these,” replied her ladyship, “ I fear your friendship would be dangerous. I have known,

by sad experience, that Platonic love seldom can exist between the sexes."

"Then, for that very reason," interrupted Rosa, "we ought not to meet—so true, so pure is the affection I bear to my absent husband, that I would not even have it sullied by the breath of suspicion; I have suffered much from supposed guilt, but my own bosom has hitherto, conscious of its own rectitude, supported me through all. Never then will I forego that sweet, that inestimable treasure of innate virtue. Prudence bids me avoid sir Owen, and I will resolutely follow its dictates."

Lady Charlotte admired and applauded the virtuous resolves of Rosa, and promised to dispense with her attendance in future, whenever she was likely to meet with sir Owen.

Nothing material occurred for some few weeks, until one day, Rosa received a note from lady Editha Llewellyn; in some agitation she broke the seal, and read its contents, which ran as follows:—



"Will my dear Mrs. Seymour do me the pleasure of passing the whole of to-morrow at Llewellyn Castle? Not having seen you so long, I sigh for your agreeable conversation, and am sorry to find that the friendship which I feel for you is not so warm on your part as mine, else you would not thus absent yourself from one who experiences so much pleasure in your society. It may be necessary to add, that my son sir Owen has left me for a few days, to join a shooting party; therefore we shall be quite alone; and I trust you will not refuse to pass away a few tedious hours with your most

"Sincere and affectionate friend,

"EDITHA LLEWELLYN."

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This note both pained and pleased our heroine. She felt grieved that lady Editha should have to accuse her of a want of respect, and she was delighted that she should now have an opportunity of proving how willing she was to oblige her,

when unconnected with sir Owen. She therefore immediately penned an answer to her ladyship, promising to attend her on the morrow. The thoughts of this visit, however, cost her some agitation, as she feared that some conversation would probably transpire relative to sir Owen, to which she should feel unequal. There was, however, no alternative; and at the time appointed she attired herself in an elegant costume to attend her noble friend.

Lady Editha received her with every mark of affection, and thanked her for her readiness in attending her commands.

Rosa assured her that the pleasure she felt in her visit was reciprocal on her part, and begged her ladyship never to suppose for one moment that her absence was occasioned out of any disrespect to her.

"I am willing to believe not," replied lady Editha; "but we will discuss that subject another time. Do not agitate yourself—we have the whole day before

us, and we will devote it to friendship and pleasure."

She then proposed a walk in their beautiful grounds, and taking the arm of Rosa; they descended through a conservatory, to a lawn, richly laid out, which led to the most lovely flower-garden that the imagination can paint. After walking through its cool and shaded groves, they arrived at a sort of grotto, which was called the summer-house; it was completely overgrown with moss, whilst flowers of various descriptions entwined themselves through its various openings. A rustic table and seats were fancifully placed within, and its whole appearance evinced the most elegant taste.

Lady Editha invited Rosa to enter and sit down; with which she complied; it was a retreat where the cool refreshing breezes were to be inhaled, even on the hottest summer's day. It was shaded from the heat of the sun by an immense hill, which arose immediately behind, and the eye became insensibly attracted by

the various scenes which presented themselves.

"This sweet place," said lady Editha, "as she seated herself by the side of Rosa, "is the favourite retreat of my son, and is entirely his own taste and superintending."

"It reflects the highest credit upon him, madam," replied Rosa; "and I trust he is rewarded for his pains in the pleasure which such a sweet retreat as this must afford to the bosom of a sensible man like sir Owen; he is, I know, a lover of nature, and here he may enjoy her bounty to its fullest extent."

Lady Editha sighed—"It once afforded him the highest satisfaction," she cried, "but of late I am sorry to observe a gloom which pervades him, and renders him indifferent to all his favourite pursuits. It is true that this spot still seems to have charms in his eye, but then it is to indulge in his melancholy, and weep over the sorrows which oppress him."

Rosa felt agitated; she saw the drift of

her ladyship's conversation, and was unable to reply.

"You are affected at this account, I perceive," said lady Editha, taking her hand; "and if you can thus feel for his grief, oh, why not generously relieve it? it is in your power, and yours alone, my dear Rosa, to restore him to peace. I am no stranger to his passion for you, and your rejection of his offer—oh, say—why are you so adverse to our wishes, when I feel for you an affection so maternal also?—Come," added her ladyship, smiling through the tears which glistened in her eye, "let me be the harbinger of good news to my son—grant that out of friendship to me, which reserve refused to sir Owen."

"Your ladyship distresses me beyond measure," replied Rosa, "because you ask for that proof of friendship at my hands which is the one I am compelled to deny. I have before dealt candidly with sir Owen—I have no heart to bestow—it is buried

with my lost husband, and can never be another's."

"As you *now* think," interrupted her ladyship; "but time, *that* never-failing antidote to all grief, will yet cause you to alter your opinion. If you have no decided dislike to my son, or a preference for another *living*, I will still cherish the pleasing idea I have formed of one day calling you my daughter: do not, I entreat you, deny him the pleasure of your society; suffer him to pay you those attentions only which the purest friendship will suggest, and he will remain contented for the present; but if you persist in shunning him, and avoiding his society, I know not what will be the consequence."

"Most gladly would I meet sir Owen as a friend," replied Rosa, who was greatly distressed by these importunities; "and it entirely depends upon him whether we can meet upon those terms, for I must positively assure your ladyship, that I can never receive the addresses of your



son. I cannot—will not dissemble. With gratitude I acknowledge the favour conferred upon me by so noble an offer—an offer as much above my hopes as it is beyond my wishes : were there no other obstacles in the way, I must affirm that I have no pretensions to such an alliance. Almost a dependant on the bounty of others, with a helpless infant to support, how could I aspire to such an union ? the heir of Llewellyn has a right to seek a lady of birth and fortune.”

“ Fortune,” interrupted lady Editha, “ is the last of sir Owen’s considerations ; his own wealth is sufficient without any increase. I will acknowledge that I have hitherto been particular as to birth ; with your family, dear Mrs. Seymour, I am totally unacquainted, never having heard you speak of any relative—will you pardon me for now asking you the question ?”

Rosa coloured—it was a subject which she always wished to avoid ; but in the present instance there was no evading an answer without placing herself in a suspi-



cious point of view.—“Certainly, madam,” she replied, “I have no reason to blush for my ancestors, who were all high and wealthy—I am the daughter of the late colonel Sedley.”

“Sedley!” repeated lady Editha, while the colour mantled over her face; “colonel Sedley your father! will you favour me with the maiden name of your mother.”

Rosa looked surprised, as she falteringly pronounced—“*Rosa Evelyn.*”

“Say,” cried lady Editha, “was she not the daughter of lord George Evelyn?”

“She was, madam,” returned Rosa, with much emotion.

Lady Editha was greatly agitated; she clasped her arms around our astonished heroine—“My dearest child,” she cried, “receive the embraces of a relation, whose heart acknowledged you from the first moment of our meeting: now can I account for the affection which I feel for you. Oh, for ever bless the hour in which I have made this fortunate discovery!”

She continued embracing and weeping over our heroine, who was also much agitated, and in a trembling voice besought her to reveal to her the mysery by which she was related to so noble, so exalted a lady, as her ladyship.

## CHAPTER XVII.

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“ DID you never hear your mother speak of her aunt, lady Editha Evelyn,” at length inquired her ladyship, “ who left her family to form an alliance more congenial to her feelings than the one allotted for her by her relatives ?”

“ Most certainly I have,” replied Rosa ; “ and often have I heard her lament the absence of one for whom she entertained the highest affection.”

“ I am that Editha,” said her ladyship, “ and your mother was my beloved, my favourite niece : and the greatest pang I

ever experienced was in relinquishing the society of so dear a relative. Often when gazing on you, have I fancied I beheld my own Rosa, as she used to look in those days of youth which we passed together; for the disparity in our years was not so very great, she being the daughter of the eldest heir of Evelyn, and I one of the youngest branches of our house: but tell me, my dear Rosa, for I am anxious to know, if that dear parent still exists?"

"Ah, no!" exclaimed the weeping Rosa, "my beloved mother reposes in peace. The irreparable loss I have sustained can never be forgotten by me—that event was a blow which sealed my destiny for ever—it left me wretched and forlorn."

Lady Editha wept abundantly—"Dear lamented Rosa," she cried, "we were then doomed never to meet again! could I have seen her once more alive, I should have been contented; but it is the will of Heaven, and we must submit; to her child, then, shall my affections be transferred; and if her dear shade can witness

the transactions of this hour, oh, may it be acceptable to her!"

Rosa was greatly affected; she threw her arms around this new-found aunt, and wept on her shoulder.

"And your father," said lady Editha—"him I never saw—does he still exist?"

Rosa mournfully shook her head, and, as well as her agitated spirits would permit, related to her ladyship the mysterious disappearance of colonel Sedley.

"Strange event indeed!" replied lady Editha. "Poor Rosa, thou wast indeed doomed to know trouble and distress; thy fate was harder than mine. I was permitted to enjoy some few years of happiness with the husband of my choice; but thy feelings must indeed have been most acute, and a prey to anxiety and suspense. With the particulars of my life, my dear Rosa, I presume you are already acquainted; they are but few, and not very interesting. My eldest brother, lord George Evelyn, who was also your grandfather, was appointed guardian over

me by our parents at their death, I being so many years younger than him. He married an amiable woman, of rank equal to his own, and your mother was the only offspring of their union. How I loved my little niece, perhaps you have heard her say, and as she grew up, our affection increased, and we lived in a state of harmony, until lord George proposed a nobleman of immense wealth as a candidate for my hand. I instantly rejected the offer, for I had been introduced by chance to sir Owen Llewellyn, a native of Wales, but whose person and manners were such as instantly to captivate me. A mutual passion took place between us, and being, as I considered, of an age to act for myself, I promised to become his. On the application of my brother, I informed him of the engagement I had made, and of course rejected his offer with firmness. But never till that moment did I know my brother's real character; I had not supposed him capable of the violence which he exhibited, as he

vowed never to see me more, unless I became the wife of his friend. It was in vain that I represented sir Owen as equally wealthy—I painted his high descent, which could even boast of royalty. He was, however, deaf to all arguments, obstinately refusing even to see sir Owen, or receive any proposals from him; and from that hour treated me with harshness and severity. I considered that my brother had no right to use such tyranny towards me, and being always of a firm and resolute disposition, I agreed to become the wife of sir Owen, and with him quit my native land. My fortune was in my own power, and I joined my hand with that of the man I loved, and with him repaired to this castle, the seat of his ancestors, where I have passed the remainder of my life in happiness, which nought but the death of so beloved a husband has allayed. Much did I regret leaving my dear Rosa, but she was too young to act independently; her father's commands

were, that I should never more hold intercourse with any of his family, and my spirit was too proud ever to seek for reconciliation; and for years I remained in ignorance as to their fate, when I, by chance, heard many years after, that both lord George and his lady were dead, and that their daughter was united to a colonel Sedley. Of the place of residence of your lamented mother I could never learn, and thus all communication between us ceased. When I first beheld you, I recognized the likeness you bore to your mother; but how could I possibly imagine that you were her child, until you informed me your father's name was Sedley? The truth flashed across my mind, and the result is, that I have now the pleasure of folding to my heart the offspring of one whom I loved with the tenderest affection."

Lady Editha ceased, while Rosa was so astonished and overcome by this discovery, that she remained almost without the power of utterance; she was so un-

used to feel any sensation of joy and pleasure, that its effects acted upon her mind with the most violent emotion. She pressed the hand of her noble aunt to her lips, and shed a torrent of tears, which in some measure relieved her surcharged bosom.

Lady Editha suffered her to give vent to her feelings, and then kindly endeavoured to sooth her.—“What will sir Owen say to this unexpected discovery?” cried her ladyship; “you will now find a relative who will be proud of his affinity to one he already admires so much.”

“Oh, madam,” replied Rosa, “if sir Owen will permit me to esteem him as a dear relative, and view me also with the same sentiments, it would afford a joy to this aching heart, which I have not known for years.”

“Sir Owen’s feelings on this occasion will doubtless be put to the test,” said her ladyship; “but your relationship will now, of course, warrant your intimacy,

and time must alone determine the result. But, my dearest Rosa, I must know something more of your real situation of life; hitherto I could not have taken such a liberty, but you have just now professed yourself to be almost a *dependant* on the bounty of others; I cannot suffer any part of my *family* to be so degraded, and it excites my surprise that the descendant of lord George Evelyn, whose wealth was immense, should be reduced to the situation which you have represented."

Rosa felt greatly agitated at this dreaded discovery; it was a question which lady Llewellyn had an undoubted right to ask; but it was enveloped in so much mystery, and so connected with the secret sorrows of her life, that she knew not how to frame an answer; her lips trembled as she informed her ladyship of some trifling events of her life, and of having been deprived of the whole of her mother's bequest by the hands of Mrs. Powell.

. Lady Editha saw the confusion of her countenance as she related these particu-

lars, and was convinced that something very mysterious had transpired. She could not think ill of her; but it grieved her much that she could not gain her entire confidence; and she expressed, in the warmest terms, her surprise that the late Mrs. Sedley should leave so beloved a daughter as Rosa so trifling a bequest at her death.

Her ladyship's private thoughts were, that she must have offended her mother by some means—perhaps by her marriage, which was evidently attended with mystery. This opinion gained strength in her mind, as, during the remainder of the day, Rosa continued so reserved on the subject, as to convince her ladyship that her union had been an imprudent one; that her husband had gone abroad, and died, was all her ladyship could obtain from Rosa, and that she was left without a provision for herself and infant.

“You are reserved, my dear Rosa,” at length said her ladyship; “but perhaps when you know me better, you will be

more communicative : my wish is to serve you ; and the daughter of my dear departed niece must not be a dependant on the bounty of others. You must permit me to be your banker, and I shall expect you will fully communicate to me all your wants and wishes."

Rosa endeavoured to make a suitable reply. How painful was it to her to use reserve with so noble a relation ! but stern fate forbade her to give utterance to her wishes, and she could only press the hand of lady Editha to her lips, with a warmth that evinced her heart was open to the warmest sensations of gratitude.

" I shall have a right now," said her ladyship, with a smile, " to expect a great portion of your time bestowed on me ; and from this moment consider this castle as your home, if you choose to accept it. Here you and your lovely infant shall meet with that protection which your helpless state demands."

Rosa was overwhelmed with the kindness of her ladyship : she threw herself on

her knees before her, and bathed her hands with her tears.—“ Oh, madam,” she cried, “ accept the thanks of one whose heart is bursting with woes of no common nature; gladly would I from this moment dedicate my life to your service, and never from this moment quit your presence; but I fear lady Charlotte would accuse me of ingratitude, were I so abruptly to leave her protection: she has been more to me than I am at liberty to express: when I was left wretched and forlorn, through the baseness of Mrs. Powell, and had no home to shelter me and my hapless babe, that exalted, that noble lady, like an angel beaming with benevolence, stretched forth her arms, and gave to myself and child a home: can I then wish to quit so great a friend, when my presence is the only return she asks—kindly insisting that my society makes her ample amends for all she does?”

“ I admire your gratitude,” replied lady Editha; “ and far be it from me to draw you from so generous a friend. Her la-

dyship and I must settle that point between us, and we must agree to share your company amicably together. At present we will make no other arrangement; but I shall expect you will give me the whole of to-morrow again, if lady Charlotte Montague has no particular wish for your presence."

To this Rosa willingly agreed; and as the shadows of evening were now fast drawing in, she begged permission to retire. Lady Editha ordered her carriage, of which she insisted on Rosa accepting; and our heroine taking an affectionate leave, soon found herself on the way to Rosewood Hall.

How different were the reflections of her mind on her return, to what they had been in the morning, when trembling with apprehension, she almost dreaded to meet the eye of lady Editha! She was then a poor, unknown dependant, without a relative to claim her. The change was almost too sudden for belief: a few hours had restored her to a branch of her family,

who was at once noble and wealthy, and who would doubtless protect her from the farther insults of the world. It was an event which caused her the utmost pleasure, and she poured forth the gratitude of her heart to that Providence who had so unexpectedly raised her so powerful a friend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON arriving at Rosewood, her first inquiry was for lady Charlotte, and finding she was at home and disengaged, she begged a few moments conversation; and when alone with her ladyship, she briefly informed her of the wonderful discovery that had been made. To describe the surprise of her ladyship is impossible; she took the hand of Rosa, and pressed it with affectionate warmth.—“ Most sincerely do

I congratulate you on such an agreeable discovery," she exclaimed. "Providence, my dear Rosa, is, I am convinced, working in your favour. Relations like these, so powerful and wealthy, will have a right to inquire into the nature of your wrongs, and will of course see them redressed."

"Ah, my dear madam!" replied Rosa, "there is still the source of my distress: lady Editha, I am convinced, views me already with some degree of suspicion, because I cannot unfold to her the real particulars of my life."

"Dear scrupulous girl," cried her ladyship, "and is it possible that you will yet submit to be viewed in a suspicious light, rather than break an oath forced under such dreadful means? You are justified in the sight of Heaven in disregarding it; no longer suffer this vile concealment: you have now friends who will see you righted, and you may defy the power of your persecutor."

Rosa shook her head; reasons the most

powerful imposed silence upon her, and she dreaded the consequence of disclosure.

"I do not know," said lady Charlotte, "whether I shall be the bearer of good news to you or not; but a packet has this day arrived from London, addressed to you: I hope its contents will prove pleasing to you;" saying which her ladyship presented her with a small parcel, addressed to Mrs. Seymour.

In some surprise Rosa received it, and looking at the superscription, found the hand was strange. She bowed to lady Charlotte, and opened it, when, to her farther astonishment, she found the envelop was from Mrs. Harrison, who briefly informed her, that a person had lately made application at her house for the address of Mrs. Seymour, and declaring that his business was of the most urgent nature, and much to the advantage of that lady, had implored not to refuse him the knowledge of her retreat, if she was herself acquainted with it.—"But," added she, "knowing that a mystery attended

your steps, and not wishing to be of any injury to you, I refused to satisfy him, until I consulted my son-in-law, Mr. Horace, who I knew would advise me for the best: by his desire, when the person called again, I informed him, that if he had any thing to communicate by letter, I would forward it to you, and you could then use your own judgment in revealing your place of residence; for notwithstanding all that is past, I would not wish to be the means of betraying you to an enemy. The result was, in a few days he again appeared before me, and presented me with the enclosed letter, which he earnestly implored me to deliver safe into your hands, as the consequences, he said, were of the most urgent nature, and connected with your future happiness in life. I have now fulfilled the promise I made, and sincerely hope that the contents will prove of service to you."

Mrs. Harrison then concluded with most kind remembrances to lady Charlotte, &c.

The surprise of Rosa may be conceived

as she perused this unexpected favour of Mrs. Harrison. With an agitated and trembling hand she opened the second letter, and with eagerness perused the contents.

Lady Charlotte beheld the colour fly from her cheeks; her whole frame appeared convulsed with agony, her eyes glared wildly around, and she sunk nearly insensible on a chair.

“Gracious Heaven!” said her ladyship, flying to her support, “what farther evils have you to encounter? oh, what fresh misfortune has thus overwhelmed you?”

An hysterical sob was all the reply she could obtain from Rosa, whose very existence almost seemed upon the extremity of decline; until at length, with a violent effort, she pointed to the paper in her hand.—“Read—read *that*!” she cried, “and then your ladyship will not wonder at my agitation. It is too much for me—Heaven is too bountiful.” Saying which she burst into tears, which greatly relieved her oppressed bosom.

Lady Charlotte took the letter: she was indeed almost petrified with astonishment—it came from the unprincipled Davis, the wretched accomplice of Mrs. Powell, who was now no longer in existence, and who on her deathbed, fully repentant of her conduct to Rosa, had solemnly enjoined him to make her that amends which was in his power alone; for he of all others was the instrument of Rosa's destruction; and he now revealed such a complication of events, as would raise her beyond the reach of her bitter enemy. The baseness of lord Darlington, whose accomplice Davis had been, was fully explained, with a variety of other incidents to be named hereafter.

The very life of his lordship now hung on the mercy of Rosa, and it will not be wondered that so sudden a shock should prove so violent to the frame of our heroine.

"This is indeed a discovery," said her ladyship; "the hour of retribution is at hand. Now, my dear suffering Rosa, now

is Heaven about to reward you for all your trials; the perfidious lord Darlington, the destroyer of your peace and honour, is now in your power—let him tremble at his impending fate. You must have instant advice how to proceed, as no time must be lost.”

“Softly,” said Rosa; “I must have a few hours cool reflection before I can proceed in this dreadful business. I am too agitated at this moment to decide what steps I must take. Violent measures adopted against lord Darlington will be dreadful in their consequences; I shudder at the bare idea.”

“Do not let a false pity for him incline you to do yourself injustice,” replied lady Charlotte; “consider his baseness to you, his unrelenting cruelty.”

“I will endeavour to act with justice,” said Rosa; “and if your ladyship will excuse me for to-night, I will meet you at the breakfast-table in the morning, and then fully acquaint you with the result of my deliberations.”

Her ladyship took her hand.—“ Good night, my dearest Rosa ; and that I may shortly see you restored to your rights, is the parting prayer of your sincere friend.”

Rosa pressed her hand to her lips.—“ My more than friend !” she exclaimed, “ my preserver, my guardian angel ! Oh that this heart could sufficiently express its gratitude !”

“ That it has already done,” interrupted her ladyship ; “ you are too feelingly alive to every little kindness, my dear Rosa. What must I have been, had I suffered a fellow-creature to perish, when a saving hand rescued you from destruction, and rendered me happy. Believe me, I am already amply repaid by the satisfaction I feel within my own bosom, by knowing that I acted as I ought.” And she once more affectionately embraced her agitated friend, and they separated for the night.

Rosa retired to her chamber, but she endeavoured not to court repose ; her pillow was abandoned, and she again perused those valuable papers, which at least had

the power to restore her to affluence, if not to happiness. Her child would now be raised to its family honours, of which hitherto she had been deprived. She gazed with rapture on the unconscious babe, who lay on its couch in tranquil sleep.

"Descendant of the house of Evelyn!" ejaculated Rosa, "mayst thou yet live to inherit its wealth! No longer I trust art thou the child of penury and dependance. Oh, wealth! never till now did I know thy real blessing; and if my heart too proudly exults in this promised acquirement, oh, forgive me, Heaven, and pardon the ambitious hopes of a mother's bosom, for the sake of her darling child!"

She threw herself on her knees, and fervently prayed for strength of mind; and at length arose from her recumbent posture, with a calmness which enabled her to deliberate on the steps she should pursue.

On entering the breakfast-parlour the next morning, she found Mr. Montague and lady Charlotte already seated; the

former arose, and respectfully taking the hand of Rosa, warmly congratulated her on the two most important discoveries which had been made on the preceding day, and added his wishes to assist or serve her in any manner that she would command, with respect to the steps to be taken towards lord Darlington—"Against whom," he added, "she must instantly proceed."

Rosa thanked him for the kind interest which he took in her welfare, but assured him she had, after a night of mature deliberation, made up her mind in what manner to act towards lord Darlington, which she hoped would meet with the approbation of her most respected friends; for sorry, she added, should she be to adopt any other measures than would be approved, both by Mr. Montague and lady Charlotte.

"Your own judgment will no doubt guide you right, my dear Rosa," said the latter; "but I will venture to answer, before I know your determination, that

your decision will be too mild a one towards the base lord Darlington."

"Consider, madam," replied Rosa, in a serious tone, "the very important charge which I have to make against him; and should I take legal measures, his life might be the sacrifice. Place yourself for one moment in my situation, reflect on the *relationship* which subsists between us, and then think whether I could calmly bear to see him brought to the scaffold, through my means! Oh, no, every tie of nature revolts at the cruel idea; sooner would I sacrifice all the hopes held out to me in this letter, than witness such a scene. This then is my determination—I will immediately write to lord Darlington, and acquaint him with the whole facts which are put in my possession against himself. This will necessarily alarm him; he will know himself to be now in my power, and will no doubt gladly accede to the proposal which I shall make—that of concealing this base transaction from the world—on condition of his immediately

restoring me to my rights, and acknowledging me in my proper rank of life. This will be the only means of restitution in his power, and which, should he be obstinate, I can enforce, as this paper will restore me to that immense wealth of which I have been so long deprived, and which will, at least, raise me beyond his cruel persecution. Yes, lord Darlington," added she, while her fine eyes glowed with energy, "thou, in thy turn, shall tremble; but I will teach thee how a true Christian can forego the paltry gratification of revenge; I will shew that mercy to thee which thou hast so often denied to me."

Both lady Charlotte and Mr. Montague warmly applauded her noble sentiments, but earnestly entreated her not to suffer herself to fall a dupe to lord Darlington, since she had now so great an opportunity in her power of redressing her wrongs.

She promised to act with caution and security to herself; and taking a hasty repast, she begged lady Charlotte to ex-

·cuse her, in order that she might address his lordship immediately. She therefore retired to her own room, and with an agitated hand informed him of the important secrets of which she had been put in possession, and the conditions on which only she would agree to bury all in silence. This task over, she felt a little more easy, as she flattered herself that lord Darlington would be glad to avail himself of her proposal, for, conscious of his own guilt, he must be certain of the fate which would await him; and the gentle heart of Rosa almost shuddered when she thought on what his feelings must be, when he should find all his baseness was discovered; his punishment, she thought, would be sufficient, for

“ Every man’s conscience is a thousand swords.”

CHAPTER XIX.

By the time she had finished writing her letter, she found it was near the hour in which she had promised to attend lady Editha. She therefore hastened to her toilet, and ringing for Mary, she was soon in readiness. Her cherub child, by the request of her ladyship, was also to accompany her; therefore, attended by Mary, she soon arrived at Llewellyn Castle.

Her noble aunt received her with every mark of affection, and pressed the little Charlotte to her bosom with maternal fondness.

Rosa was gratified by the praises bestowed on her child, and the hours flew swiftly away in pleasing converse.

Her ladyship observed the agitation under which Rosa evidently laboured, though she little guessed the real reason;

and once or twice she endeavoured to lead Rosa to the subject of her marriage, and her destitute situation.

Rosa saw but one way to act, and addressing lady Editha, she said—"I will not wrong your ladyship's discernment so much, by supposing that you have not perceived that some strange mystery has hitherto attended my steps. I fully acknowledge this to be the case—I have been the child of sorrow, but not of guilt; and this I entreat you to believe. Hope once more crosses my path—an event has transpired which will, I trust, enable me very shortly to explain every thing to your satisfaction. Will you then, dear and respected lady, rest contented with my silence till that period, and believe me when I say, that it is a most important occasion which prevents my opening my whole heart to your view? Oh! deign to say you believe me innocent of guilty actions, and I shall be happy!"

The earnestness of her manner—the angelic expression of innocence which

beamed in her eyes, filled with admiration the bosom of lady Editha, who affectionately pressing her arms around her, exclaimed—" My dearest child, I cannot for one moment cherish a thought injurious to your honour. I have indeed perceived, with pain, that some mystery surrounded you ; my only wish to elucidate it, was in order to relieve you. But after your candid avowal, I can only add, that I am willing to wait the promised explanation, and most sincerely hope the event to which you allude will terminate in your happiness."

Rosa thanked her kind aunt, and in pleasing converse they passed the remainder of the day ; and as the hours drew in, they regretted the necessity of separating.

Lady Editha insisted on Rosa accepting her carriage, to convey herself and infant to Rosewood ; and on parting, reminded her that she must repeat her visit as early as possible.

It must be naturally imagined that the mind of Rosa was at this time a complete

chaos; she felt, as it were, suspended between hope and despair; and when the time arrived when she might reasonably have expected to have received an answer from lord Darlington, she grew agitated and uneasy. She had returned an answer to the repentant Davis, as he had requested her to do, assuring him of her forgiveness for the past, obtained by his present contrition, and confession in her favour, of which she assured him that she meant to avail herself; and conjured him, if in case she should require it, that he would come forward as a witness against lord Darlington. She also farther admonished him never again to return to the paths of guilt; and that *want* should be no inducement to the commission of crime, she would most willingly relieve his necessities, if required.

The benevolence which dictated these sentiments brought with them their own reward, for she felt her bosom beat with satisfaction at having performed its dic-

tates. Angelic virtue, which can thus forgive the injuries inflicted by others, and forego the paltry gratification of revenge—shall it not meet with its reward? Oh, yes, the guardian angel, that hovers over the head of the virtuous, shall record the heroic action in that book which is alone perused by *Him* who sees and rewards as he thinks meet and right to do, whose power is infinite as good, and whose mercy is without end as it is boundless.

Day after day at length rolled on, and still Rosa received no answer to her letter. The silence of lord Darlington was agonizing to the extreme, and the suspense she endured almost beyond bearing. Lady Charlotte, with her usual kindness, strove to comfort her, and with some success, for

“ Hers was the brow, in trials unperplex’d,
That cheer’d the sad, and tranquilliz’d the vex’d.”

She reminded Rosa how much his lordship had of late been travelling about in search of his lost son, and that he might now be absent from his home again, con-

sequently her letter could not yet have reached his hands.

Rosa acknowledged the probability of this supposition; but her spirits sunk lower and lower as time rolled on, without her having that answer which would decide her fate. Lady Editha beheld her increasing dejection with much concern, and much feared her affairs had taken a sorrowful turn. She visited her at Rosewood Hall on those days which she did not go the Castle, and a most friendly intercourse was kept up by all the ladies.

Sir Owen was not yet returned, and his mother anticipated with pleasure the news she had to impart. To lady Charlotte she expressed herself in the highest terms for her goodness to her niece, and warmly thanked her for the favours conferred.

Lady Charlotte replied by saying, that the merit of Rosa entitled her to the respect of all who knew her, and most sincerely she congratulated her ladyship on the fortunate discovery which had taken

place, and which had given to her arms a relative who, however surrounded by present mystery, would eventually be found to prove an ornament to any family, however noble or wealthy.

Lady Editha said, of that she felt convinced, and could she only see her regain her spirits, it would afford her the highest pleasure.

Lady Charlotte sincerely joined in this wish, though, had lady Editha been in the possession of facts which her ladyship was, she would hardly ever have expected to see the smile of happiness diffuse itself over the cheek of Rosa again.

Lady Editha apologized to lady Charlotte for depriving her of so much of her company, but trusted she would excuse it, on account of the consanguinity which subsisted between them.

Lady Charlotte good-humouredly replied, that of course she must be contented to share her society, which was indeed too valuable to be bestowed entirely on one.

Rosa expressed her gratitude to the two ladies for the interest they took in her fate, and in their society she felt some degree of relief from the dreadful suspense which now harassed her bosom. Each night she shed the tear of bitter disappointment, as the day had passed without the expected answer from lord Darlington; and each morning her hopes renewed, that that day might terminate her doubts and fears. She felt it was impossible to remain much longer in suspense, and she almost resolved to hazard all, and visit London herself, to seek out lord Darlington, and accuse him personally of his perfidy and baseness. These thoughts she, however, as yet kept confined to her own bosom; but a train of events occurring, directed the whole course of her mind towards another channel.

Visiting one morning, as usual, at lady Editha's, she was informed of the return of sir Owen. She was much agitated at the thoughts of meeting with him, while lady Editha endeavoured to fortify her for

the interview.—“My poor Owen,” she cried, “returned only yesterday evening, and I had the happiness of seeing him in better spirits than when he left me; change of scene and society has, I trust, been of service to him. As soon as I possibly could, I spoke to him of you; but I soon found I touched the tender chord of his heart, and that absence had not yet obliterated the sentiments he cherished for you. But how shall I describe to you his emotion at the discovery made! for some minutes he could not speak—a struggle seemed passing within his bosom. I would not notice his agitation, but calmly proceeded with my recital.—‘You will, my dear Owen,’ I continued, ‘rejoice at this fortunate discovery; for having cherished sentiments of so affectionate a nature, which could not be returned, you will now be able to entertain a true and proper regard for this amiable young woman, whom you will now greet as your *second cousin*.’ The emphasis which I laid upon this last expression was not lost

upon him; he understood my allusion, and seemed prepared to answer me.—
 ‘This discovery has somewhat agitated me, my dear mother,’ he said, ‘but I will endeavour to calm my feelings. ’Tis indeed a consolation to me to be permitted to esteem her, and since she is lost to me, I will try to shew my pure regard to so lovely a relation; she will perhaps receive the affection of a cousin, which she refused from a stranger.’ I am happy to add,” continued lady Editha, “that he seems more composed this morning, and is eager to behold you.” Her ladyship now begged Rosa to permit her to introduce her to him, with which she complied, though not without great emotion.

Lady Editha pressed her trembling hand, and led her to the drawing-room, where sir Owen was seated. He arose on their entrance—he took the hand of Rosa, and for a moment seemed incapable of utterance, while the tear of emotion glistened in the eyes of Rosa.

“My dearest cousin,” cried sir Owen,

"will you accept the tender regards of your new-found relative, who, under the sacred ties of blood, will forego those hopes which your beauty and worth drew forth."

Rosa affectionately put out her hand. —"If," she replied, "you will indeed permit me to esteem you as a dear relation, I shall be most happy. My friendship has been always yours, though reasons of a weighty nature prevented my yielding to your warmer wishes; but now, freed from those embarrassments which forbade my seeing you, I anticipate with pleasure the happiness I shall enjoy in your society."

"That sweet confession ought to make me happy," returned sir Owen, endeavouring to force a smile, "for I had despaired of ever hearing such an one from your lips, my dear Rosa."

"But remember the conditions," interrupted Rosa: "I am now, you know, conversing with my cousin."

"Fear me not," he returned, "I will

be all you wish : only grant me the pleasure of your society, and I will, on my honour, repress all sentiments which would be displeasing to you."

"On that agreement we close," said Rosa; while lady Editha, who had stood a silent, though an interested spectator, now led Rosa to a chair.

All parties appeared glad that the interview was over, and sir Owen gradually recovered his spirits. He was now in the society of his still dear Rosa, and even allowed by her to pay her those delicate attentions which the purest regard dictated; and as he had now despaired of ever calling her his own, he felt rejoiced at the fortunate discovery which enabled him to view her with sentiments of a tender affection, and he hailed with pleasure the happy hour in which lady Editha had found this charming cousin; while Rosa, on her part, felt grateful to that Being who had restored her to some part of her family honours; and she flattered herself that she should yet move in the sphere

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to which she was by birth entitled, namely, that of the heiress of the house of Evelyn.

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RUINS OF RUTHVALE ABBEY.

CHAPTER I.

AS Rosa had been absent from her child during the whole of the day, she retired early in the evening from Llewellyn Castle. She felt much easier in her mind now the meeting with sir Owen was over, and likewise rejoiced that his behaviour was now such as to warrant her esteem, without any embarrassment on her part: under pleasing reflections of this nature, she entered Rosewood Hall, and repairing to her own chamber, with the anxious solicitude of a mother, rang for her darling child.

Mary entered the room alone, and evinced much surprise at the command of her mistress.

“Why do you hesitate?” said Rosa, in a voice of alarm—“where is my child?”

“Cot’s mercy on us!” ejaculated the girl, “and is not Miss Rosa safe with you, ma’am?”

“Safe with me!” reiterated her mistress, “what is it you mean? Oh, do not keep me in suspense!”

“I gave her about an hour ago, ma’am, to the gentleman you sent for her.”

“Merciful Heaven!” cried the agitated Rosa, sinking on a chair, “what have you done with my child? I sent no gentleman for her!”

The face of poor Mary became nearly as pale as her mistress’s—“Why then it must have *peen the tevil!*” she cried, “or a witch, or how should he have known where you was gone, ma’am?”

“Instantly tell me the dreadful truth,” said the distracted Rosa, “while my senses

are left! Gracious Heaven, what new horrors await me!"

Mary at length informed her, that as she was walking along the banks of the Clwyd, a gentleman, wrapped in a great cloak, approached her, and informed her that he was come, at the request of Mrs. Seymour, who was then at Llewellyn Castle, to fetch her child. Supposing it to be all right, the poor credulous girl instantly resigned the child; but at the same time begged to know if she should not also accompany her little charge to the castle. The stranger replied in the negative, adding, that her mistress had desired her to go back to Rosewood Hall, and to wait there until her return. He then forced a small compliment into the hand of Mary, and hastened towards the castle, as she supposed, with the child; while, highly delighted with the generosity of the stranger, she returned home, quite unsuspecting of any deception being practised.

To describe the distraction of poor Rosa

during this recital is impossible; her beloved, her darling babe, for whose sake alone life seemed worth preserving, was torn from her by some deep and premeditated plan, and the conviction so overpowered her, that she sunk almost insensible on a chair; but starting up with a violent effort, she wildly exclaimed—“Shall I suffer myself to sink, and make no effort for the recovery of my child? oh no! I will seek her every where, I will search every part of the vale, and every place, but I will regain her; think not a mother will thus tamely submit to the loss of her child!” saying which she rushed from the apartment, and flew to the drawing-room, where was seated the ladies Athlyn and Charlotte. The agitation and wildness of her manner greatly alarmed them, particularly when they beheld Mary following her mistress with a countenance nearly as pale.

“Gracious Heaven, what is the matter, my dear Rosa?” said lady Charlotte.

An hysterical sob was all the answer she received, until Mary revealed the fatal

cause. The ladies were much shocked at this account, and greatly blamed the girl for her folly, in suffering the child to be thus taken from her.

Her ladyship then endeavoured to comfort the distracted mother; and ringing the bell, ordered her servants immediately to commence a search in different directions, and make inquiries every where.—“What sort of a person was it?” said lady Charlotte—“describe the man as near as possible to the servants, that they may give a description every place where he may be likely to be traced.”

“Oh dear,” replied the terrified girl, “I am sure I should hardly know him again, he was so wrapped up; and yet I thought I knew his face somewhere.”

A sudden thought flashed across the mind of Rosa—“Was it the stranger,” demanded she, “who has so frequently caressed my child, within whose cottage you were sheltered from the storm?”

Mary hesitated—“Why, ma’am, I did not think at the time it was him; but now

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I recollect, the voice was something like his, and the features—but I can't be quite positive."

"I can!" ejaculated Rosa, wildly; "it is plain—I see it all clearly; his former conduct towards my child authorizes my suspicions, and I will instantly proceed to his house and demand the truth."

"Do not go yourself, my dear Rosa," said lady Charlotte; "you are too agitated, and this Mr. Hastings is a stranger to you."

"No matter," replied Rosa, hastily; "at such a moment as this I have a sufficient plea for my intrusion, even though my suspicions prove groundless; a wretched mother seeking her lost child, has Nature's passport through the world!" saying which she rushed from the room, and soon found herself by the banks of the Clwyd, where she also beheld the servants of lady Charlotte running in all directions.

The alarm was now become general, and Rosewood Hall was in a state of confusion. Lady Charlotte experienced great apprehension at the departure of Rosa

alone, and fearing for the distracted state of her senses, she desired Mary to follow her towards the cottage of Mr. Hastings.

With hasty steps Rosa pursued her way; and at length, quite breathless, she arrived at the beautiful abode towards which she had been so often attracted. With a trembling hand she rang the bell, which was immediately answered by a female domestic—"Is Mr. Hastings at home?" demanded Rosa, in an agitated voice.

The girl looked at her with some surprise, but answered in the *affirmative*.

"I have most urgent business," exclaimed Rosa; "let me see him instantly!"

"What name shall I say, madam?" demanded the girl.

"No matter—he is not acquainted with it."

"He is in the parlour," resumed the girl; "but I hardly know whether I dare disturb him."

Rosa, in the distraction of the moment, and fearing lest Mr. Hastings would not

see her, rushed into the room as the girl opened the door. A gentleman was seated reading, with his back towards her. —“Excuse, sir,” said Rosa, in violent agitation, “this seeming intrusion; but pity the feelings of a mother, and say whether you know aught of my child?”

At the sound of her voice Mr. Hastings arose, and turning round, revealed his features to the astonished Rosa, who, uttering a piercing shriek, rushed towards him, exclaiming—“*Hubert! oh my husband!*”

To describe the surprise and agitation of Mr. Hastings is impossible, as catching her in his arms, he, for a moment, lent her his support; but in an instant he turned from her with a look of horror; and placing her on a chair, exclaimed—“Rosa, wretched woman! why have you dared to intrude yourself on my presence? is it to insult my grief?”

“Do I hear you aright?” cried the unhappy girl. “Is this the reward for my long and painful sufferings on your account? Cruel, cruel Hubert! Oh, it is

too much ! I wanted but this to complete my misery !”

“ What mean you ?” he hastily replied. “ Have I not proof of your falsehood—your baseness towards me ? Oh, Rosa, you have wounded me to my heart’s core ; I cannot yet look on that face without emotion ; your presence revives all within my bosom, and drives me to madness.”

Rosa waved her hand ; she was near fainting. — “ Be composed,” she faintly cried ; “ you have been deceived ; *I am innocent* ; and, and——”

She could say no more ; her senses left her, and she would have fallen to the ground, had not Mr. Hastings flown to her assistance. Wildly he strained her to his heart, and called aloud for help ; he kissed her pallid cheek ; and, repeating her last words, he exclaimed—“ Innocent ! innocent ! Oh, if this be true, what then am I ? the veriest wretch in nature ! I have murdered this fair flower with my cruelty ! Oh, revive, Rosa, my love ! my

life! my wife! Bless me once more with thy angelic smile, and I will forget all." The alarm which he made brought his housekeeper into the room, who was much surprised at beholding a lady in the arms of her master. "Quick!" he cried, in a voice of extreme agitation, "bring restoratives!—restore this angel if you wish to preserve your master's senses! *She is my wife!* Oh, save her—save her!"

The surprise of the poor woman was visible in her countenance, but repressing all curiosity, she hastened to her relief; and after some little time, succeeded in restoring the unhappy sufferer to her senses.

At first she could not recollect the train of events which had occurred, but when she beheld her husband leaning over her, with a countenance indicative of the greatest solicitude, she recollected all; and casting a look of tender expression towards him, she burst into tears. He took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. "Oh, Hubert," she cried, "and have you really believed me guilty? Oh, if you knew

the sufferings of this heart, the persecution I have endured, you would indeed pity me."

On hearing her voice the housekeeper modestly withdrew, while Mr. Hastings, drawing a letter from his pocket-book, exclaimed, in a voice almost broken by agitation—" *Look at that*, and tell me what I am to think! there is the fatal, horrid scroll, which deprived me of happiness, and almost of reason."

Rosa took the letter from his hand, and on perusing it, was indeed astonished at the strong resemblance it bore to her own writing; while the sentiments it contained stung her to the soul, in the idea of its having been supposed to be her own.— "Hubert," she exclaimed, "you have been most grossly abused and deceived. Could you, for one moment, believe that Rosa could have dictated such sentiments as these? False to *thee*! oh, Heaven! When you shall know all my sufferings, you will indeed acknowledge how much you have wronged me, by supposing me

that lost, that guilty being which this letter expresses."

"Explain your meaning, Rosa," interrupted Mr. Hastings. "What am I to think?"

"That this letter, though bearing so strong a resemblance to my hand, is a forgery," replied Rosa, in a voice of firmness, "as base as it is false, to have separated us for ever, which, *but for Divine interposition*, would have been accomplished. I have proof to convince you of its falsity stronger than my word."

"And its author then?" he interrupted, in violent agitation.

"You will know too soon, dear Hubert," she replied; "your own heart will whisper our mutual enemy; he has indeed fatally triumphed over me."

The look of horror which stole over the face of Mr. Hastings proved that he understood her. He took the hand of the weeping Rosa, and straining her to his heart, bathed her face with his tears.—
"Oh, Rosa! beloved, adored wife! what

have I not made you suffer by my cruel absence ! How could I ever believe you false to me ! yet, was not this infamous scrawl sufficient proof ? Oh, Rosa, the bliss and agony of this moment is insupportable ! the joy of holding thee pure and innocent once more to this beating heart, is too much, while the conviction of having wronged thee by my suspicions, and the dread of what I have to hear, overcomes my fortitude ; you can never forgive me. Thus sinking at your feet, I implore your pardon ; but I fear you will abhor me, and spurn me from you with hatred and contempt."

" Rise, my beloved husband ! " she replied, in a voice of tenderness ; " this heart still, as it has ever done, vibrates to thee with the truest affection ; and when thou shalt hear all the sufferings of thy Rosa, thou wilt acknowledge how great the love which has endured all for thy sake. But, alas ! this is not a time to talk on woes passed, for my present trouble exceeds all yet. In the joy of the moment in having

found thee, it passed away for an instant ; but it returns now with double horror. Oh then, dear Hubert, answer the question which I asked you as a stranger—relieve my suspense by saying whether you know aught of my child."

" *Your child !*" re-echoed Mr. Hastings. "What child ? I do not understand you."

"Then she is lost ! for ever torn from me !" cried the wretched mother. "Oh, Hubert, *our* darling babe is gone, and I am the most miserable of mothers !"

"Gracious Heaven !" ejaculated Mr. Hastings, in great emotion, "*and am I then a father !* Oh, let me clasp my infant to my heart !—Where, where is it ?"

As well as her agitation would permit, Rosa informed him of the dreadful loss she had sustained, which had led her to seek him, in order to ascertain whether he had the child, as he had on former occasions noticed the babe so much, though in ignorance of its affinity to him.

Mr. Hastings clasped his hands in mute astonishment—"That sweet, that lovely

girl, my own child!" he at length exclaimed. "Oh, nature! thou art indeed all-sufficient. Oh, my Rosa, much hast thou to inform me; yet I am so lost in wonder and astonishment, that I am scarcely able to hear thy wrongs."

"I am also much surprised," replied Rosa, "to find in Mr. Hastings, the recluse of whom I have so often heard, my own Hubert, my husband; why have you thus secluded yourself, and caused me so much torture in the fears of your safety?"

"I feel your reproach, my love," he replied; "but your question is easily answered. Disgusted with the world, and driven almost to madness at your supposed perfidy, and to avoid the importunities of my father, which I will explain hereafter, I resolved to shut myself up from all society; this sweet retirement took my fancy; and the better to conceal myself, I took the name of Hastings, and thus have I passed on unmolested."

"While I," interrupted Rosa, "have been dwelling near you for many months,

constantly hearing of you, drawn towards you, as it should seem, by some unknown though powerful cause, and yet never seeing you until this fortunate day: yet when I reflect on the strange event which has guided me to you, I can but mark the good and evil with which this life is chequered. Who could suppose the loss of my little cherub would be the means of leading me to you? My heart is torn with contending passions; for though blessed beyond my most sanguine expectations in being restored to thee, my first, my *only love*, yet can this bosom know no peace until my child is restored to my arms. Oh! Hubert, help me to seek my darling, and save me from distraction." She threw her head upon his shoulder, and bursting into tears, relieved her surcharged heart; while Mr. Hastings pressing his interesting wife to his heart, mingled the manly drops which stole from his eyes with hers, and remained for a few moments in expressive silence.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the first emotions had in some degree subsided, both became more calm and composed ; and Rosa endeavoured to give a brief detail to her husband of all that had transpired relative to herself since their separation : but language cannot do justice to the agony of mind which he sustained during the recital ; that the beloved object of his affections, for whose happiness he would have sacrificed his own, should thus have been so cruelly injured, and that through the means of a hand so closely allied to himself, was a reflection of a nature so agonizing, that it gave his firmness a most severe shock ; and when Rosa related the wretched condition to which she was reduced, when her idolized babe first opened its eyes to this world of woe, the feelings of the husband

and the father gave way ; and striking his forehead with his hand, he groaned aloud with mental anguish. Rosa, with affectionate solicitude, endeavoured to compose him—"Be calm, dear Hubert," she cried, "that Power, who alone can heal the wounds of those whom his wisdom chasteneth, raised me friends in my adversity, and guarded me safe through the storm: thus, as when the rolling billows dash the waves mountains high, and threaten destruction to all around, the same all-powerful hand can calm the tempest, and bid the proud waves stop; and the same Providence who presided in the storm, alone dictated the calm which succeeded, and thus has it been with me. Unexpected succour was dispensed around me by a noble friend, to whom you now owe the preservation of your wife and child."

She then proceeded to inform him of the unbounded philanthropy of lady Charlotte, in whose praise she was most lavish; but when she also revealed the

late discovery which had taken place between herself and lady Editha, and that sir Owen Llewellyn was her cousin, the astonishment of Mr. Hastings increased. He soon discovered, by the emotion and blushes of his Rosa, that *she* it was who was the object of his friend's unhappy passion; and as he recollected the conversation he had had with sir Owen on the subject of unreturned love, his agitation was excessive, to think *that object* was his own wife; but the tenderness of his Rosa, whose manners evinced her heart was all his own, re-assured him, and banished all unfavourable suspicions from his bosom.

She was interrupted in her detail by some one enquiring for Mrs. Seymour, and she immediately recognized the voice of poor Mary in the hall, whom lady Charlotte had ordered to follow her mistress. —“ Dear lady,” said Rosa, “ I must return to thee, and ease thy anxious fears on my account; see, Hubert, her kind solicitude; oh! how can I ever repay her?”

“ You will not leave me, Rosa,” cried

her husband, in a voice of alarm, "nor quit a house where you are of course the mistress? oh! never more shall you be torn from these arms, lest I again lose you for ever."

"I will accede to all your wishes, dearest Hubert," replied Rosa; "henceforth your will is mine; but do not deny me the request I make of returning immediately to lady Charlotte; she is suffering on my account, and I must relieve her; say then you will accompany me back to Rosewood, and let me introduce you to her ladyship, whose benevolent heart will rejoice in my happiness."

To this Mr. Hastings acquiesced, and Mary was ordered into the presence of her mistress. With affectionate zeal the poor girl inquired if she had found the dear child. Rosa burst into a fresh flood of tears, and mournfully shook her head. Mr. Hastings took her hand, and endeavoured to sooth her; while Mary looked her surprise at the familiarity which evidently subsisted between them.

Mr. Hastings, in a few words, endeavoured to explain the mystery; which had the effect of chaining up the tongue of the astonished girl in silence, as she could not comprehend in her mind, how her mistress, who it had always been said was a widow, should thus have a husband in existence.

Before Mr. Hastings left his house, he summoned his two female servants to his presence, and introduced his Rosa as his wife.—“ You are no doubt, my good women,” said he, “ astonished at this strange discovery; I am not myself at present sufficiently recovered from the effect of agitation which it has produced in me, to explain all particulars—suffice it to say, this lady is my lawful wife, and your future mistress: circumstances of a peculiar nature have combined to separate us for a long period, and we have remained in ignorance of each other’s abode, until this blessed night has by chance revealed it. You will henceforth obey her orders, as you have hitherto done mine; and when

you are acquainted with the sweetness of her disposition, you will find a pleasure in attending her commands."

As well as their surprise would permit them, the two females returned a suitable answer; and Rosa also addressed them with great kindness, and they retired well satisfied with the prospects of their future mistress.

Mr. Hastings now expressed his readiness to accompany Rosa to lady Charlotte, but apologized that he had no carriage to convey her back, and the hour was now getting so late, that he feared she would take cold.

Rosa smiled through her tears, and replied by saying, that adversity had taught her to encounter real difficulties, and under his protection, how, she added, could she fear ill?

He sighed, as he reflected on the deprivations to which she had been obliged to submit; and drawing her arm through his own, they proceeded on their journey to Rosewood, while Mary followed their

steps. Mr. Hastings was all joy and rapture in having found his beloved wife pure and innocent; the sudden transition from misery was almost too much for him to bear, and he expressed his bliss in passionate language to the object of his tenderest regard. Her heart was also eased of a weight which had so long oppressed it. She was in the presence of that adored husband, for whose sake she had suffered so much; he was safe—he was preserved from *the assassin's steel*—a danger to which he had been exposed, and from which her *silence* could alone protect him. She had kept that *silence* inviolable, and she had now her reward—that of clasping him safe in her arms. But though the feelings of the wife were thus joyful, yet the grief of the mother triumphed; her child was gone—torn from her arms too at the very moment when she could have given her her rightful protector, and presented her to her father. This was a pang which even Mr. Hastings could not assuage, and he tenderly condoled with

her, and held out hopes to the distracted mother that the child would be restored. In this manner they reached Rosewood; and Rosa, on inquiry, finding that Mr. Montague and lady Charlotte were alone in the drawing-room, she immediately repaired to them, while Mr. Hastings remained in the parlour.

"Well, my dear Rosa," said lady Charlotte, "what success—have you found your darling?"

"Alas!—no," replied the agitated Rosa; "she is, I fear, lost to me for ever: but I have news that will surprise your ladyship as much as it has overwhelmed me. Excuse this emotion; I am indeed agitated to excess; but my dear lady Charlotte will rejoice with me when I inform her that in Mr. Hastings, the recluse, I have discovered my long-lost husband."

"Gracious Heaven!" ejaculated her ladyship—"is it possible that I hear you aright? Oh, my dear Rosa, how I rejoice at this fortunate discovery!"

"Allow me, dearest lady," interrupted

Rosa, "to introduce him to you; he is impatient to behold and bless the preserver of his wife and child."

"And I am no less so," replied her ladyship, smiling, "to see this all-accomplished man, for whose sake you could bear so much."

Mr. Montague, on finding he was in the house, requested that he would immediately repair to the drawing-room; and Rosa presenting this beloved husband, introduced him as he really was—namely, the honourable Mr. Grenville, *the son of lord Darlington*; and turning to him, she cried, while tears almost choked her utterance—"Behold, Hubert, the friends, but for whose fostering protection I should ere now have been a wandering outcast—who rescued me from a state of poverty and misery, and gave shelter to my beloved child. Oh, Grenville!" she added, "help me to express my gratitude, for I am bowed down with the weight of obligation."

A manly tear diffused itself over the face of Mr. Grenville, as taking a hand of Mr. Montague and his lady, he poured forth a torrent of thanks for their unexampled generosity; at the same time lamenting in the most bitter terms that his adored Rosa, the descendant of a noble house, and heiress to its immense wealth, should thus, through treachery and cruelty unparalleled, have been exposed to such extreme misery; and that he should ever upbraid himself, in the conviction that her union with himself had been the primitive cause of all her sufferings.

“And yet, sir,” said lady Charlotte, “I will venture to assert, that even in the keenest anguish, of the moment, she has never repined at that circumstance: her attachment, her steady, inviolable truth to you, has never been for a moment shaken. She has, to my knowledge, been surrounded with wretchedness, poverty, and temptation—bearing with the most heroic fortitude the cruel insults of the world, and suffering what to a really delicate and vir-

tuous female is the greatest evil of this transitory state—that of a sullied reputation; but even this she endured, sooner than reveal a circumstance which involved you in such supposed danger. I am now proud to say, I beheld in her the conscious integrity which marked her soul, and at once convinced me of her innocence; and I am thankful to that Providence whose humble minister I have been, to have enabled me to preserve her safe through the storm, and at length to resign her to the protection of that husband who will now guide her from further insults. From delicacy to yourself, I refrain from reverting to the conduct of her base persecutor; your feelings on that head must be acute. I have therefore now, sir, only to congratulate you on the restoration of this treasure, whose value is above all earthly praise: she is indeed the richest gift of heaven.”

Mr. Grenville bent his knee to the ground, and taking the hand of his adored

Rosa, pressed it fervently between his own.—“ If a life of gratitude and of love can reward her,” he exclaimed, “ behold me from this moment willing to dedicate it to her. Of her worth I have been before convinced; think then what must have been my feelings at receiving so convincing a proof of her guilt, as I imagined I possessed! Oh, lady Charlotte! you who are blessed with sentiments so noble and so exalted, will not wonder at the effects it had upon my mind; reason almost sunk beneath the shock; the world seemed to me as nothing; society lost all charms; and to avoid the importunities of that parent who, dreadful to say, has been the author of all my misery, I concealed myself from every eye, and but for this fortunate visit of my Rosa this evening, I might have remained still in ignorance of the happiness which was so near to me; but even now my heart is torn with anguish; for while I rejoice in the restoration of my wife, I mourn with anguish the loss of that darling child, whom nature

has taught me to love, without knowing her real claims upon me."

The wretched parents shed the bitter tear of anguish at the loss of their infant, while Mr. Montague advised that every reward should be offered for its recovery, and likewise intelligence sent off to London, that every search might be made by the police.

Lady Charlotte wept with her friend, and participated in her grief; but she also rejoiced in the unexpected blessing which that night had been thrown upon her head. With true Christian benevolence she had supported her through the various trials which she had undergone; it will therefore readily be believed, that the heart who can sympathize with the distressed, can also rejoice at the termination of their woes; and as she scrutinized the countenance of Mr. Grenville, she felt convinced that the happiness of Rosa was safe in his hands. Honour and integrity beamed in his sparkling eyes, which were now bent with tender concern on his in-

teresting wife; and her ladyship thought she had never beheld a more congenial pair. Of Hubert Grenville, as the son of lord Darlington, she had often heard during her residence with Mrs. Harrison, and she now acknowledged, as she gazed on his handsome form, that he was worthy the praises bestowed upon him; and she perfectly agreed with Miss Monimia in the expression of which she recollected having heard that lady make use, when she asserted, in opposition to Miss Dashley, that he was indeed "every way the reverse of his father."

CHAPTER III.

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EARLY on the following morning Rosa laid the papers before Mr. Grenville which she had received from Davis, which fully explained the treachery that had been used towards her by lord Darlington.

The shock received by Mr. Grenville was excessive. To find that a father had thus acted such a dreadful part, was agony to his soul, and he paced the room for a short time in a state bordering on distraction.

Rosa, with angelic sweetness, forgetting her own wrongs, endeavoured to sooth him, and assured him of her entire forgiveness of lord Darlington.

"He is unworthy of it," he replied, "else would he not ere now have flown to you, and embraced the pardon you held out in your letter? But this most

cruel conduct, this contemptuous silence towards you, shall no longer be endured. I will immediately hasten to London, present myself to him, and demand immediate restoration of your rights, which he cannot, *dare not* refuse, when such strong evidence arises. Oh, Rosa! beloved Rosa!" he added, looking mournfully in her face, "you can no longer love me; you will hate me as being the offspring of a man so stained with crimes. Oh, what must be the feelings of that son who blushes to acknowledge his father!"

"Be composed, dear Hubert," she cried; "repress this agony of grief, and be assured that the regard I feel for you can never be shaken by the conduct of your father. I know your heart; it is the seat of honour; and never shall the errors of lord Darlington militate against yourself. Oh, no, rather let me be the means of consoling you on this trying occasion. See your father, and all will yet be well. Through your means, he will grant me that justice which he has so long denied.



Perhaps," she added, weeping, "you will also gain some intelligence of our child. I cannot help thinking that it is to his machinations that I owe this fresh persecution."

"Let us hope not," replied Mr. Grenville; "his errors are already black enough, without this additional stain; but I will lose no time in my pursuit, but, instantly give orders for my journey."

The cheek of Rosa turned pale, for though she approved of his plan, yet the idea of again being separated from him, caused her the greatest anxiety. She knew what she had already suffered from his absence, and she dreaded further evils.

He observed her emotion, and besought her not to alarm herself with unnecessary fears.—"This absence," he cried, "will only be for a short time. I shall leave you still in the protection of your worthy friends, under whose roof you will be safe; while, in my own native country, I shall be secure. The assassin's

steel," he added, with a sort of shuddering smile, "the danger with which I have been threatened, is not in use in happy Britain; an Englishman fears not such deeds as those; and I shall soon return, I trust, with joy to the adored of my heart."

This arrangement was communicated to Mr. Montague and lady Charlotte, who highly approved of it, and begged that Rosa would still remain with them during the absence of Mr. Grenville, to which he added, he should thankfully consent, as he considered her more safe than being alone in his cottage.

"Aye, that cottage," said Mr. Montague, smiling and addressing Rosa; "do you not remember with what delight you gazed on it on our first beholding it? When I told you it wanted but such a mistress to make it an earthly paradise, little did I then imagine the right you had to constitute it so!"

"And have I really been so near my blessing," said Mr. Grenville, "without be-

ing sensible of it? Oh, Rosa, perhaps at the moment you were viewing its walls, I was in the act of calling on your name in all the bitterness of woe. Thus it is with man—ever prone to murmur and repine, when, if he would but look up—

‘ He would behold, in characters of light,  
Blessings sent him, in his own despite.”

It was now agreed, that on the following morning he should commence his journey, previous to which Rosa requested that he would accompany her to lady Editha Llewellyn’s, to whom she wished to communicate the good and evil which had befallen her since her last visit; she also added her fears that she stood rather in a doubtful point of view with her noble aunt, as she had never been able to explain her real situation.

“ All shall be revealed,” said Hubert, “ for though ’tis painful to recount the errors of a parent, yet your honour demands it: you shall be vindicated, let what will be the consequence.”

Rosa requested that he would soften as much as possible the conduct of lord Darlington, as she knew what his feelings would be while preferring such a charge against his father.

Mr. Grenville appreciated the goodness of heart which prompted this request; and he mentally reflected how lord Darlington could ever have injured such an amiable woman.

Lady Charlotte begged them to make use of her carriage, and in a short time they set out for Llewellyn Castle.

Rosa was greatly agitated at the idea of this visit; nor was Mr. Grenville free from emotion; they both had much mystery to unravel respecting themselves, and they found their situation rather embarrassing; it was a scene, however, which they must go through, and therefore the sooner it was over the better.

On the carriage stopping before the ancient edifice, Rosa felt herself unusually agitated. On alighting, the footman announced her name. Mr. Grenville follow-

ed her steps, and they soon found themselves in the presence of lady Editha and her son.

"My dear Rosa," cried her ladyship, "I was just thinking of paying you a visit, but am rejoiced that I am so agreeably prevented."

Rosa bowed—she could not speak; while sir Owen looked on Mr. Grenville with surprise; but taking his hand with the most friendly warmth, exclaimed—"*Hastings*, this is a pleasure which I did not expect, since you have so long withstood my solicitations."

"I have indeed," he replied, "for which I trust you will excuse me; but though I have been proof to your entreaties, I could not refuse the request of this lady, who begged I would accompany her here this morning."

Lady Editha and sir Owen looked surprised, while the cheek of the latter crimsoned with evident chagrin.—"I did not know, sir," said he, "that you and my fair cousin were acquainted; nor can I under-

stand why you have both been so reserved on the subject."

"Because," replied Mr. Grenville, "we were in ignorance of it ourselves. Oh, sir Owen," he continued, "I shall no doubt try your feelings by what I have to communicate. Lady Editha," added he, gracefully bowing to her, "I have not the honour of your acquaintance, but I have heard enough of your character from the lips of my Rosa, to convince me of your goodness of heart; your kindness to her I must endeavour to repay, and to add to the vast obligation we owe you, I have to request that you will also acknowledge me as your relation, for I am the happy husband of your beloved niece."

Sir Owen sunk on a chair in violent agitation; while lady Editha, looking rather reproachfully at Rosa, exclaimed—"And have you then thus suddenly *again* entered the married state? was I so unworthy of your confidence as not to be trusted with so important an event?"

"Hold! for pity's sake hold!" interrupt-



ed Rosa, "and no longer view me with the eyes of suspicion; too long have you beheld me in that light. Oh, my dear, my respected aunt, the hour has at length arrived when I may avow my real claims, and convince you of my innocence. No clandestine *second* marriage has been solemnized—give me leave to present to you Mr. Grenville, the husband of my heart, from whom I have been so long separated, under circumstances the most painful. Last night only brought about the joyful discovery—and I have flown on the wings of joy to you, dear madam, to disclose my true situation."

"You disarm me of my anger," said her ladyship, with a smile, and tenderly embracing her; "and if you are restored to happiness, I must congratulate you, though I am in total ignorance of the whole train of events."

"Your ladyship shall be so no longer," said Mr. Grenville. "You behold in your angelic niece a being who has been a victim to treachery and cruelty—who has



undergone trials which would have overwhelmed one-half her sex in dark despair; yet has she, by the help of Providence, risen superior to all, and lives to bless me with her presence. Sir Owen," added he, turning to him, "you must of course be much astonished at seeing me in so different a character. You knew me only as the wretched Hastings, the solitary recluse, and I gratefully acknowledge, that to your friendship I owe the only hours of peace which I passed within my sad cottage. Now then that happiness once more shines upon me, you will not I trust withdraw the sacred pledge between us. I am now acquainted with all your feelings—I know a pang has harassed your heart; but I hope the late discoveries which have taken place have given birth to new ideas, and that you will give me your hand in token of friendship and affection."

Sir Owen wrung his hand with friendly warmth—"May you and my cousin," said he, "enjoy every blessing this world can afford! nor will I envy you your happi-

ness—my fortitude has been put to a severe trial, but it will yet enable me to rise superior to the ills of life. I have gained two relations, both dear to my heart, and in whose society I cannot but be happy : yet I would ask an explanation of these strange mysteries ; and why both you and Rosa have assumed a different name and character to that which you really bear ?”

“ I will endeavour,” said Mr. Grenville, “ to give you the heads of our eventful history in as few words as possible ; but at present I must still ask your silence on certain subjects, until the result is known ; and oh, my friends, pity my feelings when I have to implicate a father as the cause of all our sufferings.”

He then briefly related the events which had transpired, but for which we must yet entreat the reader’s patience a little longer.

To describe the horror and surprise of lady Editha and sir Owen is impossible ; the former dropped the tear of compassion on her agonized niece, and bestowed the

warmest praises on her heroic conduct. Nor was she hardly less grieved at the cruel loss of the darling child than the wretched mother, while she added her firm belief, that the man who had acted so basely as lord Darlington had done, would not hesitate in being the perpetrator of this fresh outrage.

Mr. Grenville informed her of his intended journey, which her ladyship highly approved, and offered Rosa her protection during his absence; politely thanking her, he pleaded the previous promise made to lady Charlotte; for though he was now fully convinced of the purity and faith of his Rosa, yet he knew with what passion sir Owen had loved her, and he felt that his journey would have been embittered with fresh thorns, in the idea of her passing her time so constantly with him.

The excuse was readily admitted by lady Editha, who said, now that she was acquainted with the whole of lady Charlotte's kindness to her niece, she felt her-

self under a greater weight of obligation than ever on her account; and added, smiling—"That she thought henceforward the Vale of Clwyd ought to be called the Valley of Discoveries, since so many strange events had transpired there since the residence of Rosa and lady Charlotte."

"It will be a spot ever remembered by me," cried Rosa, with much emotion, "with the most grateful sensations, for here I have been restored to those who claim the nearest ties of my heart; and could I but once more clasp my adored child in my arms, I might, I think, venture to pronounce myself happy."

All endeavoured to console and persuade the distressed mother that ere long her most sanguine hopes would be realized, and that the retreat of the child would be discovered, particularly as every possible investigation was now set on foot for that purpose.

After passing a few hours with their noble relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Grenville

once more returned to Rosewood, where they spent the remainder of the day. As night drew on, Rosa grew sad and pensive—before the morning dawn the former was to commence his journey, and spite of herself the unbidden tears rolled down her cheek.

Hubert tenderly kissed them away—“Do not,” he cried, “distress yourself unnecessarily—my absence will be but a few days at most; and be assured, my love, no power on earth shall detain me longer from you. I have known now, by sad experience, the pangs of separation, and no circumstance shall again induce me to remain from you. I go, I trust, to restore you to happiness and your rights.”

“Heaven grant you may, dear Hubert!” she replied; “but remember this—“my happiness depends upon your presence—all other hopes are fallacious; the paltry gratification of wealth I can now readily forego, since you are the world to me.”

Grenville soothed his sorrowing wife by

every endearing art in his power; but, alas! the dreaded hour too soon arrived; and even the firmness of his sex forsook him as he clasped her in his last embrace: while Rosa, overcome by the violence of her feelings, sunk fainting, as the carriage drove from the door which contained the beloved of her heart; yet still—

“ Did she turn to look again,  
For him her eye now sought in vain.”

#### CHAPTER IV.

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AGAIN did the task of consolation devolve upon lady Charlotte; but in this instance it was an arduous one, for the fortitude which had hitherto supported Rosa through all her troubles, appeared now to have forsaken her; no argument could sooth her for the loss of her child; the circumstance of having been restored to the arms of her husband had in some



measure ameliorated her sufferings, and his presence had cheered her drooping heart; but on his departure she again felt all the miseries of her situation, and her spirits sunk to a state of dejection.

All that friendship could offer was bestowed upon her. Lady Charlotte, with kind solicitude, forced her into society; her amiable sister, lady Athlyn, paid her every attention, and insisted on her visiting at Melbourne House. Not wishing to appear insensible to the kindness of such noble friends, she accepted their invitations, as likewise those of her aunt, lady Editha, who now manifested the regard she felt for her niece by her kind attention to her under her afflictions.

Rosa was grateful to all; she felt and appreciated their goodness, but society was become irksome to her, and as often as she could, she stole away to indulge in solitude. The cottage of her husband was her most favourite retreat; here she found a melancholy pleasure in weeping, and in reflecting that in this sweet retire-



ment. Grenville had also shed the tear of anguish on her account.

It was on the third day after his departure, that finding lady Charlotte was engaged with company, she stole from the house, and wandered to the vale; and choosing the most retired paths, she indulged in her own sad reflections. It was one of those beautiful evenings which seem to calm the soul by its tranquillity, and sooth the surcharged heart:

“ The moon roll’d on in cloudless glory,  
 Beneath a wilderness of blue,  
 And all along the mountains hoary,  
 Flung a pale garb of silvery hue ;  
 One little twinkling star alone,  
 At distance in her pathway shone.”

She gazed with enthusiastic admiration on the surrounding scenery; the beauties of nature alone occupied her attention, and her thoughts were raised to heaven—earth seemed to possess no charms, for she had proved their fallacy—and to that bright abode could she alone look for peace. The stillness of the scene accorded

with her present sensations, which seemed too sacred to brook the busy tumult of the world, for

“ Nature had all her music hush'd,  
Save the wide ocean's ceaseless roar,  
Whose foaming billows eager rush'd,  
To kiss the pebbles on its shore.

So calm, so beautiful, so bright,  
So full of sweetness was the night,  
One could almost have wish'd that morn  
Would ne'er again those skies adorn.”

Absorbed in deep meditation, she pursued her walk through a retired and shady lane, which suddenly terminated in a path leading to Ruthvale Abbey. She shuddered as she beheld those ruins, which since her last alarm she had so cautiously avoided; but a train of reflections immediately crossed her mind with respect to the mysteries contained within its walls, which she had imagined had been connected with herself, and had foolishly suffered herself to believe that her husband had been murdered there; his restoration, however, to her had convinced her of her

mistake, and she now almost laughed at her foolish terrors; yet some horrid mystery evidently dwelt there; and if it concerned her not, it was a pity for her to seek a repetition of those horrors which before overwhelmed her, and prudence whispered to avoid the fatal spot; she therefore turned with that intention, and was retracing her steps, when she observed the figure of a man, who was evidently watching her; his form and features were concealed from her view by a large cloak, and struck alarm to the bosom of our heroine, who trembling violently, endeavoured to pursue her way.

The remoteness of the place, and the actions of the unknown, who immediately followed her, excited great agitation, and her limbs almost refused their office.—“Whither so fast, lady?” said the man, in a disguised voice, but which Rosa thought she had somewhere heard before.

In increasing alarm she endeavoured to proceed faster, maintaining a profound si-

lence; but her pursuer gained fast upon her, exclaiming—"Why, lady, will you persist in flying from one who wishes to serve you—one who knows the sorrows of your heart, and who alone can assist you?"

"You mistake your object," replied the trembling Rosa; "you cannot afford me assistance, of which I am not in want."

"Would not the *restoration of your child* serve you?" he exclaimed

"My child!" repeated the agonized Rosa—"oh, if you know any thing of her, in mercy reveal where she is! any reward you wish shall be yours—conduct me to her, and any sum you name I will most thankfully pay you."

"I know where she is concealed," he replied, in a calm and deliberate tone.

Rosa raised her clasped hands towards him, and implored him to reveal the place, or to conduct her to it.

"To shew you," cried he, "that my assertions are true, I will bring you to the

presence of your child—therefore turn and follow me.”

Rosa trembled and hesitated—a momentary distrust crossed her imagination, and she scarcely knew how to act—“First inform me,” she exclaimed, “to what distance am I to be taken, and with whom is my child?”

“Your question will soon be answered,” he replied, “by your own observation—in *yonder tower* your darling awaits your arrival.”

“In *yonder tower*!” reiterated Rosa, in a voice of horror—“worlds should not tempt me again to enter that spot of terror; it is impossible my child should be there; you have introduced this conversation only on purpose to torture my wounded feelings.”

“Of what good would that be to me?” said he, in a tone of harshness; “I solemnly avow that your child is at this moment within this ruined abbey; and if in *this instance* I speak not truth, may Heaven chastise my guilty head! But choose

your own way; proceed home, and lose the only chance you will ever have of regaining her. I thought a mother's feelings would have braved all, in such a cause."

"Oh yes," she exclaimed, thrown off her guard by this appeal, "I will encounter any thing and every thing in such a cause; therefore lead on, and I will follow you."

A momentary courage seemed to lend her aid; and in a few minutes she found herself ascending the broken stairs which led to the tower: on reaching the first room she distinctly heard the cries of a child; it was her own—she recognised the tones, and darting forward, gained the door which led to the apartment where she had encountered so many horrors; the cries evidently issued from there, and in an ecstasy of joy she turned to her conductor, exclaiming—"May the choicest blessings of Heaven fall on your head!"

The man was evidently agitated; he raised his hands to his eyes as he replied



—“ Alas ! lady, I am not worthy of them.” He opened the door, through which she passed, while he closed it on the outside, and disappeared.

Rosa hastily gazed through the dim light of the chamber, when, oh, moment of bliss ! she actually beheld her child in the arms of another man, also concealed in a cloak. The infant in the same moment recognised its mother, and calling in lisping accents her name, extended its little arms. She rushed towards her child ; but the stranger retreating, threw off his disguise, and held the babe from her reach. In motionless horror the wretched mother gazed on the form before her, as, in a voice of terror, she pronounced the name of *lord Darlington !*

“ Yes, wretched woman,” he replied, “ behold the man whom thou hast dared to rouse by thy silly threats ! Well may you shrink with terror at my unexpected presence. Now who shall tremble at the punishment which awaits them ?”

“ Oh, lord Darlington,” interrupted



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Rosa, "do not trifle with my feelings at such a time as this; give me my child, I implore you; see how she holds her little hands in supplication to be restored to her mother."

A malicious smile stole over the countenance of his lordship, as with a savage exultation he cried—"Dost think I summoned you here to afford you bliss? Shall I reward *you*, whom I hate with all my soul? No, prepare thyself for farther tortures, while I shall glut upon thy fruitless despair."

Rosa was dreadfully alarmed, but endeavoured to appear firm and undaunted.—"Think not, lord Darlington, I am thus to be intimidated by your threats—on the contrary, it is you must tremble at the presence of one whom you have so grossly injured. Recollect the facts of which I am in possession, and that you are now in my power."

"In your power?" he reiterated.—"Dost think that I would submit to be in the power of such a worm as thee? By

Thine own temerity thou hast drawn this fate upon thy head. Thy silly threats I laugh at and defy. Did you suppose that I would live to be pointed at by the finger of scorn, while I owed my life to your indulgence? The deed I have committed I glory in; and while you sleep in the slumber of death, I shall live to enjoy that wealth which I have gained by blood."

Rosa was almost annihilated with horror, as she read his dreadful purpose in his malignant features.—"What mean you?" she demanded, in faltering accents.

"To rid myself of an object whose presence is my bane," he replied; "therefore prepare yourself for death, for this chamber is your tomb!"

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Rosa, sinking on her knees, "you would not surely add murder to the rest of your crimes? Oh, save your soul from such a weight of guilt!"

"My soul," he repeated, while a laugh of horror stole over his convulsed features,

which now exhibited more the expression of insanity than any thing else, and convinced Rosa that she was in the presence of a maniac, and from whose violence she could expect no mercy—"My soul," he continued, "is already sunk too deep in guilt to retrieve; therefore let me glut on the pleasures of revenge. Hear all I have done, for thy tongue will never be able to babble the important secret to a world to which thou wilt never return. But to add fresh tortures to thy dying hour, know that in this chamber *thy father* met his death; by my orders the blow was struck to his heart, and thus I triumphed over the man who dared to rob me of my prize; and here it is fitting that his daughter should meet the same fate!"

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the horror-struck Rosa, as she recollected all she had heard in this dreadful apartment; "is it then the shade of my murdered father who wanders ill at rest, till justice shall overtake his murderer? Oh, if thy bless-

ed spirit dost hover over my head, oh shield thy unhappy child from the dreadful purpose of thy base assassin !"

"Thy appeal is vain," replied lord Darlington; "the days of superstition are past; neither ghost or witches now arise to protect their fallen damsels. No, no, thy father has slept too long in the tomb to which I sent him, to break the confines of the grave !"

A loud and heavy groan was instantly heard, at no great distance from them, though no object was visible.

Rosa shrieked; while lord Darlington turned for a moment to where the sound appeared to proceed; it was repeated, and though at any other time it would have been the most appalling, yet at the present moment it seemed like the voice of Heaven in the ears of Rosa, sent to save her.

"Do you not hear those sounds?" said she. "Tremble, lord Darlington, at the vengeance thou hast provoked! Give me

my child, and let me quit this dreadful place, ere Heaven shall send an avenging spirit to punish thy guilty head."

"Ha, ha, ha!" replied the now maddened lord Darlington, "dost think I am to be terrified by mere sounds? Nothing human or supernatural shall save you. One little blow will rid me of thee!" Saying which he drew a dagger from his bosom, and holding fast the affrighted child in his left arm, who now screamed violently, he darted upon the wretched mother, and aimed the deadly stroke at her bosom.

A convulsive shriek stole from her lips, as she warded his blow by flying towards the couch, which had formerly caused her so much horror, by the sentences which were there written, but which she now too plainly understood.

Lord Darlington pursued her; again his arm was raised, when a figure stood between him and his victim. So instantaneous had been its appearance, that neither could ascertain its entrance. It extended its arms, and completely shield-

ed Rosa from the grasp of her persecutor, who, gazing with horror for a moment on her awful protector, retreated a few paces, and dropped the dagger on the ground. A cry of agony burst from his lips, as in frantic accents he pronounced—" *Sedley*, thou art indeed arisen from *the grave to blast my sight!*"

" Yes, inhuman, guilty man," replied the spectre, " Heaven permits me to be the instrument of preservation to my child—to shield her from thy accursed arts, and thus to prove the weakness of that arm, which but now was extended towards a defenceless woman with savage triumph; but Heaven was too just to allow the blow, and thus I rescue innocence from thy grasp." Saying which the figure darted upon lord Darlington, and almost with gigantic strength forced the affrighted child from his arms.

Rosa now ventured to rise from the posture into which she had sunk on the unexpected appearance of the spectre, and by the pale light of the moon, which



gleamed on the chamber, she beheld she was in the presence of the mysterious inhabitant of the tower, whose awful form had so often terrified her; but the conviction that it was now indeed the spirit of her murdered father, gave new sensations in her bosom, and she sunk again fainting beneath so severe a shock. From this stupor she was aroused by the approach of her child, whom the mysterious figure almost threw in her arms.

It is needless to add, the transported mother caught it in rapture, and pressed it to her bosom in speechless delight.

"Fly!" exclaimed the unknown form, "fly while it is in your power! quit this place of horror, and fear no further ill—I will be near thee!"

Rosa waited not another command; but as well as her trembling limbs would permit, rushed through the apartments, and succeeded in descending the ruinous steps, down which she moved in safety with her precious and dear-bought charge.



CHAPTER V.

ON finding herself once more in safety, and out of that abode of horror, Rosa, pressing her darling to her bosom, was hastening along, when reflections the most painful arose in her mind: under the impressions of terror, she had believed that it was a supernatural power which had thus saved her from destruction, and that it was the spirit of her father who wandered through the drear abode; a moment's consideration however pointed out the folly of such an idea, and convinced her that the form was a living one. She had beheld features which were evidently glowing with life, though emaciated; she had heard the sound of his voice as he addressed her, and promised his protection; and reason pointed out that it was by human means, however strange and myste-

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rious, she had been saved. Nature whispered in her heart, "was it in reality her father?" The idea was so pleasing, although so awful, that she encouraged it with joy. Under this impression, could she fly and leave him to the mercy of lord Darlington?—could she any longer endure the cruel suspense relative to her father? she felt it was impossible; yet to return would be madness—to expose her poor babe to that danger from whence it had just been rescued, would have been barbarous, and she remained for a few minutes stationary, not knowing what course to pursue.

While she deliberated, the sound of voices met her ear; she trembled as it approached nearer, when in the next moment two figures were visible, as they rushed down the flight of stone steps which she had just descended. She plainly discerned one to be the concealed stranger who had ensnared her to the abbey, while the other was the same mysterious form who had just rescued her.

"You have broken your oath and ruined me," said the former, "unless you instantly return to your place of concealment, and let the transactions of this night be buried in mystery, and which will serve to increase your future safety."

"Never, Barnard," replied the unknown, "never again will I submit to such a shameful incarceration! Hitherto life has had no charms for me; but now that I have beheld *my child*, a father's feelings outweighs a thousand oaths forced as mine, and no power on earth shall keep me from her; and the arm that dares to impede my progress shall forfeit with its life the bold attempt!"

"Rosa, now convinced of the real truth, rushed towards that parent whom she had never before known, and sinking at his feet, she pronounced the name of "Father."

"Rise, my child!" he exclaimed, at the same time tenderly embracing her, "and dispel all fears; I feel assured thou art indeed my daughter, the offspring of my idolized Rosa. Oh! say where is she?"

oh! dreaded question—where is thy mother?"

Rosa averted her face in an agony of grief—she could not speak—to record her mother's death was too painful, and she remained in silence.

"I see," he cried—"my fears are confirmed—I read my loss in thy countenance! Oh, Rosa, child of my heart, thou alone are left to comfort me!"

"This is not a time," said the other man abruptly, "to be holding conferences here; something must be done for all our safety; lord Darlington is not a man to be trifled with, and his vengeance will quickly pursue us."

"Alas!" replied the injured Sedley, "he is no longer in a state to inflict punishment; in yon chamber he lies, a sad proof of the horrors of a guilty conscience; my unexpected appearance has overpowered him, and a convulsive fit now chains him to the earth. It is your duty, Barnard, to see to him; remove him to your cottage, and let him want for nothing; I will

see him again, but it shall be in the face of the world ; I will no longer submit to base concealments !”

Barnard finding him so resolute, and touched with some compassion for the grief of Rosa, returned, though with some degree of reluctance, up the stairs, muttering as he went that he was a ruined man ; while colonel Sedley, once more turning to his daughter, and kindly taking her hand, exclaimed—“ And now, my dearest child, will you afford a home to that parent whom cruel fate has so long deprived of one—will you shelter me beneath your roof ? Alas ! I am impatient to know by what means you have thus been ensnared by lord Darlington ? I fear, my child, thou hast also been a sufferer by his base arts !”

A momentary gleam of joy passed in the mind of Rosa at the request of her father. She had indeed a home now of her own ; the beautiful cottage of Mr. Grenville was at her command, and thither she resolved to conduct him—“ Oh

how gladly, my father," she cried, " shall I give you welcome within my walls ! blessed night, which has thus revealed an incident of so much importance to my happiness, the restoration both of my father and my child ! I fear my joy will be too great to bear. Oh, teach me, Heaven, to raise the prayer of gratitude for all thy mercies !"

" Sweet infant," exclaimed the colonel, as he pressed the hand of the lovely babe, " little did I imagine the claims which thou hadst upon me, when I lamented thy supposed ill fate, in being the victim of such a villain as lord Darlington ; and you, my dear Rosa, little did I suppose it was my own child that I once conversed with under such mysterious circumstances. Do you not remember the strange being who terrified you so much at the ruins, when you fell in a fainting fit ?"

Rosa gazed upon the features of her father, and acknowledged in them the being whom she had at the before-mentioned period believed to be a supernatural one.



—“ Those fatal ruins,” she replied, “ have caused me hours of agony. I would ask an explanation of all those mysteries, which I am persuaded you, my father, can unravel?”

“ I can indeed,” he replied, “ and will relieve all thy apprehensions as soon as we arrive in a place of safety; but fatigue now overpowers me; these limbs, unused for years to take further limits than the confines of the abbey, and a frame debilitated with grief, almost sink beneath this sudden extreme.”

Rosa looked on her father with concern; she beheld his step was weak and tottering, while her own was far from firm; the agitation she had undergone, added to the fatigue of bearing her child so far, combined to exhaust her; and truly thankful was she when she beheld the walls of that cottage of which she now was mistress; and sounding the bell, the maid soon appeared, while Rosa, trembling with emotion, exclaimed—“ Behold, my father, our peaceful abode; it is here I can give



you that welcome which affords me so much happiness." She led him to the parlour, where, placing him with affectionate solicitude on a couch, she gave orders to prepare a room immediately for colonel Sedley.

"My dearest Rosa," he cried, "already I feel rewarded for all my sufferings, in being possessed of such a daughter as thee; thy filial conduct is engraven on my heart—that heart which throbs to clasp you in its embrace. Oh, my child, my Rosa, thou art indeed a comfort to this care-worn heart! But tell me, my dearest girl, what title do you bear in this house? and who is the happy man whom you have blessed with your hand? let me behold the husband of your choice, that I may greet the only relatives stern fate has now left me!"

Rosa felt some agitation at this question, though a natural one on the part of her father; yet she had now to avow a marriage to her parent, which would perhaps be displeasing to his ears, while his breast was yet glowing with the injuries

he had sustained from that being to whom she was compelled to own her affinity.

"Alas, my father!" she replied, "I have also been surrounded with mystery and sorrow: I have been the victim, like yourself, to perfidy and concealment; separated from a husband whom I love with the fondest affection, my days have passed in agony and sorrow: need I add, that the cruel lord Darlington has been the author of all my woes?"

"Execrable villain!" cried the colonel, "was not thy insatiable revenge satisfied with the destruction of my happiness, but thou must extend it to my offspring? Henceforth thy name shall be branded with infamy; the world shall know thy guilt; all good men shall shun thee, as they would perdition; and to speak in the words of Dryden—"Thy name shall be to all succeeding ages curs'd."

"Oh, hold, my father," exclaimed the agitated Rosa; "you know not what you say; call not maledictions on his posterity. Behold my child," she added; and sinking

on her knee—"wouldst thou that *she* should suffer for the errors of her ancestors? Oh, my father, I see your surprise; but spurn me not from you, when I avow that I am the wife of Hubert Grenville, the son of lord Darlington."

Horror for a moment seemed to deprive him of utterance; he gazed earnestly on his prostrate daughter, when, grasping her hand, he cried—"Is it possible that I hear you rightly?—form an union with the son of your family's destroyer! Unhappy girl, I fear thou hast sealed thy fate; the descendant of such a man allied to thee! Oh, Heaven! this is a blow for which I was not prepared."

"Alas! my father," replied the weeping Rosa, "do not add to my sorrows by your anger: when you shall know my Hubert, your heart will soften; he is elegant, amiable, and honourable; for me he has incurred his parent's displeasure, and has suffered deeply; do not then condemn the son for the father's crimes: in mercy forgive an union, which, though hasty

and clandestine, was the result of a most sincere affection."

Mr. Sedley appeared to struggle with his own feelings.—"I would wish to be just," he exclaimed, "and certainly not extend my hatred to an innocent offspring; for I cannot think my child, who appears mild and pure as the breath of morn, would unite herself to an unworthy object: but let me see him, and I will then judge whether he deserves the character you give him; love is sometimes blindfold, and sees not the fatal snares spread for its victim."

"But other eyes, my father," interrupted Rosa, "saw and beheld his matchless qualifications; my sainted mother esteemed him, even though he was the son of her bitterest enemy; and her dying eyes closed in the belief, that in Hubert Grenville her daughter had chosen an honourable protector for life."

Mr. Sedley was much affected.—"If," said he, "thy mother approved him, he must be worthy of her child, for she was

all a female could be, blessed with judgment, wisdom, and an understanding far beyond the generality of her sex; think then what my feelings must be towards the fiend who destroyed my dream of love with that sainted angel! can you wonder at the malediction which passed my lips? But you must explain to me the particulars of your life, and then I shall be better able to judge whether your union merits condemnation or approval."

"I will explain every circumstance," replied Rosa; "and likewise trust that you will also reveal the mysteries of your life; but before I enter upon my long and sad detail, allow me to retire for a few moments, in order to write a note to a lady to whom I am under infinite obligation, as you will soon acknowledge."

For this purpose, after consigning her beloved babe to the servant, who had strict orders to remain by its couch, so fearful was she of again losing her treasure, she retired to the library, and wrote to lady Charlotte, whom she was aware must

be very uneasy at her protracted absence; she therefore, in as few words as possible, explained the wonderful discoveries of that evening, and begged her ladyship to excuse her returning that night to Rosewood, as she could not think of quitting her father; and under his protection she flattered herself she must be safe.

• This note was dispatched by a trusty man, whom the housekeeper knew, and Rosa once more returned to the parlour: her father was reclining on the sofa; his eyes were bathed with tears, and the name of his lost wife fell from his lips. Rosa joined her tears with his, and for the first time she had the melancholy pleasure of sympathy in her grief for the loss of her beloved mother.

. As soon as they could sufficiently compose themselves, they prepared to give a recital of their sufferings; but now, for the satisfaction of the reader, we shall relate in our own words the whole of the transactions which had combined to render all their fates so dark and mysterious.



CHAPTER VI.  
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“OF all the follies incident to youth,” says Blair, “there are none which either deform its present appearance, or blast the prospect of its future posterity, more than self-conceit, presumption, and obstinacy;” and this remark was fully exemplified in the boyish days of lord Darlington. Mr. Grenville, the father of this unworthy son, was a man of the strictest honour and integrity; his understanding was good, and his heart feelingly alive to all those softer sensations which a tenderness of disposition created: yet happiness was not his permanent lot on earth. Early in life he lost a beloved wife, who left him one only pledge of their union; and as the afflicted father gazed on his motherless boy, he vowed to fill the irreparable loss the infant had sustained, as much as it was pos-

sible for him to do. His first care, as reason dawned, was to impress a sense of religion and morality in his youthful mind; and who would have supposed, with such a preceptor, that the seeds of vice could have been inculcated in his breast? yet so it was; young Grenville early shewed symptoms of a temper and disposition prone to violence and revenge—that darkness of character where we find no heart, through which no natural affection is seen to penetrate, is the fatal omen of growing depravity and future shame.

As he advanced in years, the counsels of his excellent father were laughed at and despised: full of his own conceit and abilities, he derided the admonitions of his parent, and deemed all his advice as the timorous suggestions of age; and too impatient to brook restraint, he plunged with precipitant indiscretion into the midst of all the dangers with which life abounds. On his reaching the age of eighteen, the elder Grenville became seriously alarmed;

the excesses and extravagance of his son daily met his ears, and he deemed it wise to limit his income, which his wealth had hitherto allowed him to be profuse in bestowing: this course, however, only produced a worse effect; the gaming-table was resorted to, and in a short time young Grenville became the associate of characters the most depraved; yet still were the more refined and polite circles open to him, for he possessed the art of making himself agreeable; his person was good, and he could assume the most winning address and facetious manners, which was sure to gain him a welcome reception. His vices were concealed by the appearance of sanctity, and he could smile and deceive at the same moment: could he have given his own character, he might have said, in the words of the poet—

“ Why, I can frame my face to all occasions ;
I can add colours to the cameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.”

Many were the victims of his treachery

and falsehood; and his father became most seriously alarmed at the profligacy of that son whom he had so fondly reared. Often did he counsel him to select *one* from among the many females with whom he associated, and by a prudent union, avoid those disgraceful amours which continually reached the ears of Mr. Grenville. Marriage was however an event by no means approved by our young practitioner in vice, and he continued his profligate career, until his attention was at length turned to a more worthy object.

It was at this period that Rosa Evelyn, a most beautiful and interesting girl, became the inmate of Mr. Grenville's house. Her father, lord George Evelyn, on his deathbed, had appointed him as guardian to his daughter, feeling convinced of his honour and integrity. Lady Evelyn had previously paid the debt of nature, and lord George had bequeathed the whole of his immense property, without restraint, to his daughter, his sister, lady Editha, having offended him too highly by her

union with sir Owen Llewellyn. He died without expressing any wish to see her, or to place his daughter under her protection.

On Miss Evelyn taking up her abode with her guardian, young Grenville became most passionately attached to her; and he now really felt all that ardour of affection for her which he had hitherto only pretended to those unfortunate females who had fallen victims to his art. With *her*, marriage he even considered he could endure, as, to become the master of her immense wealth, was a temptation not to be withstood by him; ambition was his ruling passion; and had Rosa even been old and decrepid, he would have sought her hand, to gain possession of a fortune for which he now panted. But how was his desires heightened by the beauty and loveliness of the object! She was indeed all that could charm the heart of man; and young Grenville soon began to assail her with all those arts which he so well knew how to assume.

His evenings were now passed at home, and his father began to hope a reformation might be effected in him; he saw, with pleasure, the ascendancy which Rosa had gained over him; and though he hardly dared to hope that his son was worthy such a prize, yet he flattered himself that he might, for her sake, abandon the shameful course to which he had hitherto given himself up, as the society of a truly virtuous and beautiful female is the best antidote which can be administered to an association with those who wear the garb of vice. But young Grenville was too great an adept in dissimulation to be really what he seemed; his career of guilt was just the same, only more cautiously concealed, that they should not reach the ear of her whom he intended to make his chief victim.

But to no purpose were his concealments, or the restraints under which he actually did impose himself; for, from the first moment of Miss Evelyn having beheld him, she conceived a most decided

dislike, which all his attentions towards herself could not remove; and when he at length dared to breathe vows of love into her ear, she repulsed him with so much coldness, and so steadily refused all his offers, as to leave him no room for hope.

Accustomed as he had hitherto been to meet with success from other females, he was astonished at her refusal, and mortified and disappointed, he retired from her presence in a state bordering on frenzy; the natural malignancy of his temper broke forth with powerful sway, and in the passion of the moment, he vowed the most horrid revenge on the innocent object of his wrath, at the same time resolving, if possible, still to obtain her. His first step was to apply to his father, who heard with pleasure such a declaration, and promised to speak in his favour to the fair object of his wishes. He did so; but Miss Evelyn firmly refused her guardian, as she had his son; for, added to the dislike which she privately enter-

tained for him, his real character had met her ears; and she ingenuously inquired of Mr. Grenville whether he could conscientiously recommend a young man, with such principles, as her future protector for life?

This was a painful question for a father; but he would rather forfeit every hope than his integrity or his honour, and he candidly acknowledged the unworthiness of his son; but added his hopes, that an union with her might have been the only means of reclaiming him.

She expressed her regret at her inability to oblige him, but positively declined any farther intercourse whatever; and Mr. Grenville, too honourable to use any authority on so nice a point, promised never more to mention the subject to her.

Young Grenville now again plunged into the deepest excesses, which he took no pains to conceal, as his apparent amendment had made no impression on the object of his wishes; he was indifferent as

to the opinion which she might now entertain of him, resolving, at a future period, to be revenged for all her present scorn; and he at length carried his base plans so far, as to elope with her from his father's house by stratagem and force. He had prepared an abode many miles distant from the metropolis, whither she was to be immured until she consented to become his, which he flattered himself she would eventually do.

She was, however, providentially rescued from her perilous situation by the intrepidity of a young and gallant officer, who hearing the screams of a female issuing from a carriage which he by chance was passing on horseback, with some brother officers, immediately seized the horses' reins, and succeeded in stopping the vehicle, though not without imminent danger to himself. With the assistance of his companions, he forced open the door of the carriage, where he beheld the infamous Grenville forcibly detaining the distressed Rosa on the seat. The beauty of

her countenance, and the distress which beamed in her eyes, was not lost upon captain Sedley, as, in a voice of agony, she implored him to save her from the arts of her persecutor.

Maddened with rage, Grenville called his servants to his aid. A desperate struggle ensued; but courage and humanity gained the victory over baseness and perfidy; and captain Sedley received the now almost senseless form of Rosa in his arms.

Grenville saw her borne from his sight with sensations which might suppose to arise in the bosom of a fiend, who suddenly loses a prey for which he had spread his deepest wiles; he swore the most horrid revenge on her brave deliverer, with whose name he was now acquainted; but finding that one of the gentlemen had dispatched a servant to the magistrate of the town they were in, he thought it most prudent to retire from the field; for, as guilt makes cowards of us all, so did he feel that he could not vindicate his

conduct; and therefore re-entering the carriage, he ordered it to drive off as quick as possible, hoping that his name might not be known.

Mean time, captain Sedley had borne the agitated Rosa to the principal inn, and acquainting the landlady with her true situation, besought her to bestow the utmost tenderness upon her. This request was immediately complied with, and with great humanity she insisted on Miss Evelyn endeavouring to take a little repose, as her spirits were in a state of the greatest agitation.

With this kind offer she complied, while captain Sedley assured her he should not quit the house until she was perfectly able to leave it also; and on her retiring, he informed his companions that he should, of course, consider himself as bound in duty to conduct the young lady in safety to her friends, as he had had the happiness of having rescued her; and as they had only been riding out on a party of pleasure, the time was not of conse-

quence to him. Some of the gentlemen, who wished to return to London immediately, proceeded on their journey, and the remainder staid with captain Sedley until Miss Evelyn made her re-appearance.

If he had been before struck with her lovely form when under the impulse of terror, how much was it now augmented, when, with ineffable grace and sweetness of manner, she poured forth her thanks to her brave deliverer; adding, that the vast service which he had rendered her would never be forgotten on her part, and assured him that her utmost gratitude was his! There is something so pleasing to a man of worth and honour in the idea of having rescued woman from threatened danger, that all other considerations are lost in the exquisite feelings of delight to which the occasion has given rise—and thus it was with captain Sedley; and as he arose, and led her to a chair, he felt that he would not relinquish, for the wealth of worlds, the claim which he had upon her gratitude; and the title of being her protector,

at that moment, appeared to him as far surpassing all others. In the course of conversation, he politely begged to know where he should have the honour of conveying her in safety?

This question greatly agitated her, as could she have consulted her own wishes, she would not have returned to the house of her guardian, after the base conduct of his son; but prudence whispered the impropriety of her remaining any longer than was necessary with her present companions, without any other female than herself to sanction her conduct. She therefore informed the captain of her residence, and requested that a carriage might be ordered to convey her to London; to this captain Sedley agreed; but insisted on being her escort till he placed her in safety, adding—"That he should only have performed half his duty, if he were to suffer her to travel alone."

Terrified for fear the base Grenville should again molest her, Miss Evelyn consented, and captain Sedley and his

companions, who were all men of honour and humanity, accompanied her to town.

They found the elder Mr. Grenville in great consternation, respecting the mysterious absence of Rosa, and he embraced her with a warmth that evinced how much he esteemed her; and when she presented captain Sedley to him as her brave deliverer, he wrung his hand, and poured forth his thanks; at the same time, with a look of dread, as he half suspected the truth, demanded *who* had been the perpetrator of so glaring an outrage?

Out of delicacy to his feelings, Rosa declined mentioning names at present; but this very forbearance convinced him that his fears were but too true. With great modesty, captain Sedley now offered to withdraw, but requested permission to inquire after her health on the succeeding day.

Mr. Grenville immediately gave him a most cordial invitation to his house, adding—"That the service he had rendered him entitled him to a welcome at all

times, and that his doors would ever be open to him."

Well pleased with this reception, the captain advanced towards Rosa, and taking her hand, assured her that the remembrance of the trifling assistance he had been so fortunate as to render her, would ever operate on his mind with the greatest pleasure.

An involuntary sigh escaped from her bosom as she once more expressed her thanks, her hand trembled as he ventured gently to press it between his own, the colour suffused her cheeks, a tear dimmed the lustre of her eye, and a new sensation seemed to take possession of her bosom. Struggling with herself to gain fortitude, she bade him an adieu; and on his quitting the room, she requested her guardian to allow her to retire to her own room, in order to recover her spirits, before she entered into any farther conversation with him; and when alone, she endeavoured to reflect with composure on the preceding events, which almost now appeared as a

dream, so quick and strange had been the sudden transitions of her fate. The elegant and handsome form of the captain still presented itself before her "mind's eye;" that she had *seen him* was *no dream*; that indeed was a pleasing reality; and she almost forgot the agony she had experienced when in the power of the base Grenville, as she thought on the fascinating manners of captain Sedley. Oh, love! insidious love! how great is thy power over thy victims! The heart of woman, while overflowing with grateful sensations, easily becomes thy prey; the tenderness natural to her sex prompts the generous emanations of her soul, and fills the mind with new ideas. Sweet sensations, alternately pleasing and painful, arise in her bosom, and her heart throbs with tender emotion; surely this may be called the first feelings of love, and no moments during life are scarcely so blissful as the first dawnings of that great and master passion. Thus it was with Rosa—gratitude was the chief spring which directed her thoughts

towards her preserver; but it was also accompanied by other sensations, and from reflecting on his person and behaviour, the idea of what *his* true situation in life might be, arose in her mind. Was it not possible that he might be engaged, or even *married* to another? and this thought caused her the most uneasy sensations.

Ashamed almost of her own weakness, she endeavoured to calm her mind, as she knew Mr. Grenville must be also in a state of great uneasiness respecting her elopement, of which she must now give him the particulars. She therefore, after a little time, once more repaired to the drawing-room, where she found him awaiting her presence, in great perturbation of mind.

CHAPTER VII.

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"SURELY I am the most miserable of fathers!" exclaimed Mr. Grenville, on hearing the communications of Rosa; "henceforward I have no son; he has forfeited every claim to my indulgence, and by this last atrocious act, has severed the bonds of affection between us; yes, unhappy boy! from this moment I pronounce thee an alien to thy father's house; never more will I sanction his presence."

Rosa, with angelic sweetness, tried to sooth the afflicted father, and even pleaded that young Grenville might be forgiven; adding—"That it was her wish, if he would grant her permission, to retire to some other abode, as it would certainly not be pleasant, or consistent to her feelings, to meet with her persecutor in that house."

“Fear not,” replied her guardian, in a more resolute tone than she had ever heard him assume before; “Grenville never more enters this house; my resolution is not to be shaken. I have vowed, if I found him to be the author of your elopement, to banish him for ever from my sight. Justice shall now usurp the place of affection; and at a distance from that parent, whose peace of mind he has broke, and whose counsels he has despised, he may indulge in all the vices of his depraved nature: and as for you, my dear girl,” he cried, taking her hand, while a tear stole down his cheek, “I will not say it is my command, but my request, that you will continue beneath my roof during your minority; an unworthy son shall not make me unmindful of the precious trust which your father bequeathed to me; stay with me, and soften the pangs which my unnatural boy has inflicted upon me; if you refuse, I shall conclude that I am also disagreeable in your eyes.”

Miss Evelyn was much affected; his

grief pierced her heart; and although somewhat contrary to her wish, she agreed to remain with him. She knew that his authority could compel her to do so, therefore she preferred yielding to his entreaties, rather than his commands. He was pleased with her compliance, and told her, that from that moment he should consider her as his only child, and that the time would arrive when she would find that his professions were not confined to words alone.

The next morning, the name of captain Sedley was announced; the colour mounted on the cheek of Rosa, and her agitation did not escape the eye of her guardian. In a tremulous tone, she answered the tender inquiries of her gallant preserver, who, with unaffected anxiety, hoped she had recovered from the effects of her fatigue and terror.

She assured him she had, and again expressed the obligation under which she lay to him, in which Mr. Grenville also joined; and with great frankness com-

mented on the depravity of his son, in having committed such an act of violence.

Miss Evelyn had the pleasure of finding that the captain was single; and that by birth and fortune he was every way suitable to her wishes; while the impression she had made on his heart prompted a repetition of his visits, which proved so agreeable to both Mr. Grenville and his ward, that a short time found him the accepted lover of the all-accomplished heiress.

Mean time, young Grenville, with the assurance so inherent to his nature, had presented himself before his father, whom however, to his surprise, he found too much offended to accept of any apology on his part; in vain he pleaded the violence of his passion, which had driven him to such extremes.

Mr. Grenville viewed the *action*, and not the *motive*; and he candidly told his son, that his house was no longer an asylum for vice like his; and that until he heard of a reformation in his conduct, he

would see him no more. Young Grenville retired from his presence still more enraged than ever; but when he heard of the intended union of Miss Evelyn with captain Sedley, he vowed the most horrid revenge on their heads, taking a dreadful oath to blast their happiness for ever.

His father greatly felt the cruel necessity to which he had been driven in this treatment of an only child; he vainly hoped that this step might bring him to repentance; but, on the contrary, the most profligate career was still pursued by him. The shock proved too much for Mr. Grenville, and he gradually sunk beneath the blow. His health became impaired, and the only consolation he derived, was from the affectionate attentions of his ward. Wishing to see her united to so worthy a man as the captain, in whom she would find a protector when he was no more, he yielded to the entreaties of the young soldier; and Miss Evelyn was united to the man of her choice, with the entire appro-



bation of her guardian, before she became of age.

After their marriage, captain Sedley was ordered out on foreign service; and during his absence, his sorrowing wife again resided with her guardian, whose declining days she soothed with the most assiduous care.

Feeling that he could not long survive, he wrote to his unnatural son, imploring him to reform his conduct, and to hasten to his presence before he quitted the world for ever. This request was however unheeded; and the unhappy father, in an agony of despair, gave over all farther solicitation. To his great satisfaction, he lived to witness the return of captain Sedley, who came home victorious to his now happy wife. His bravery had been rewarded with honour and promotion, and the rank of colonel was bestowed upon him. Peace once more sat smiling on our favoured isle, and he retired, with his beloved Rosa, to a beautiful estate, situated some miles from the metropolis.

Mr. Grenville was soon released from his sorrows. Death, the welcome visitor to the wretched, closed his sufferings. Broken hearted at the conduct of that son who had destroyed his happiness, he sunk beneath the blow. Both the colonel and Mrs. Sedley attended him to his latest moments, and his last words were to express his gratitude to Rosa for her attention to him.

On his decease an express was sent to the unworthy son, to inform him of the awful event, and avarice prompted what affection could not. He hastened immediately to take possession of the property, which he now imagined was his own; but what was his disappointment on opening the will of the late Mr. Grenville, to find that he had appointed colonel Sedley as sole executor to his property! and after expressing his anger at the unnatural conduct of his son, and his determination that his wealth should not be wasted at the gaming-table, or the other equally dishonourable pursuits to which he painfully

knew him to be addicted, he cut him off with the sum of three hundred pounds a-year, which would be a check to his extravagance, and at the same time sufficient to keep him above want; and as a proof of his regard to his late ward, who had proved herself a daughter to him, he bequeathed the whole residue of his estate entirely at her own disposal. This, with a few trifling legacies to some faithful domestics, comprised the will.

Mrs. Sedley was astonished at this act in favour of herself. She was both pained and pleased; for Grenville, enraged with madness at this last blow to all his hopes, openly avowed his displeasure; nor could the yet unburied form of his father keep him within bounds—to that parent to whom he had paid no respect while living, he cared not for, now his last remains lay within their narrow house. He accused both the colonel and Mrs. Sedley of having, by their arts, drawn his father into such an act.

With calmness and patience they listen-

ed to his abuse; conscious innocence supported them against his invectives; and could Rosa have had her own way, she would have cheerfully resigned her fortune to satisfy the revenge of Grenville; but colonel Sedley resolved to maintain the rights of his wife, and the disappointed son was obliged to submit to the decree.

After the last duties were paid to the remains of Mr. Grenville, colonel and Mrs. Sedley once more retired to the country, where they enjoyed for a while uninterrupted happiness. Their wealth was immense, and they diffused around blessings to those objects whom they found in want of assistance; while Grenville, at a distance, envied their felicity, which he swore to destroy; and he only forbore to act until his revenge should be certain, and "deadly as the tiger's spring." To make up for the loss of his inheritance, he had insinuated himself into the good graces of a maiden lady, who possessed an affluent income, and by an union with her,

amended his own, and restored him to that wealth for which he panted. Meanwhile he kept a continual spy on the actions of colonel Sedley, on whom he determined to wreak his vengeance. He had met with a man, a foreigner by birth, in his career of vice, to whom he had been of great assistance, and this Barnard in return had promised to perform any deeds for him which he should require. To him had Grenville confided his intentions respecting the colonel, whose life was to fall the sacrifice to his base enemy's revenge; and the opportunity was unremittingly watched for by his persecutors.

Barnard was the last race of a family who had once been noble; Ruthvale Abbey had been the abode of his forefathers, but from a loss of fortune and family honours, had now fallen for many years into a state of complete decay; and as ruins always excite a degree of terror and superstition among the weak, so it was reported to be haunted, and the place was shunned in general by the inhabitants of

the vale of Clwyd. To this spot it was agreed that colonel Sedley should be ensnared and murdered, for which deed Barnard was to receive a reward sufficient to support him for the remainder of his life. For many months their victim escaped from their diabolical plans: his happiness had been increased by the birth of an infant daughter, and the young *Rosa* was the delight of her fond parents. Scarcely however had the little innocent attained the age of six months, when she was deprived of the care of her father, by those means already related.

Barnard, ever near, and ever upon the watch, observed the colonel go out, and unattended; and on his return home, through a lonely wood, he was attacked by Barnard and another accomplice, and borne, after a desperate conflict, to a carriage, which was waiting, where, after tying his hands, and placing a gag in his mouth, he was speedily conveyed to Ruthvale Abbey. In this state he was secured in a chamber of the tower, where, unbind-



ing his hands, and taking the gag from his mouth, he was left to himself.

The horrors of his situation arose upon his mind, and drove him almost to agony: Weak with the blows he had received in the contest, he could hardly support his trembling frame, and he sank upon a couch, which stood half mouldering with decay in the middle of the apartment. Here reflection pointed out to him, in glowing colours, the agony that his beloved Rosa must be enduring at his absence. This idea filled him with madness, and he arose with the vain hope of making his escape; but although the place was decaying in many parts, yet this chamber was secure, and in an agony of disappointment he paced the room for nearly an hour, when his reverie was interrupted by the appearance of Barnard, who entered the apartment, well armed, and a loaded pistol in his hand. This precaution he had deemed as necessary, well knowing the bravery of the colonel, who now demand-



ed the cause of the outrage, and to whom he owed this shameful transaction.

"To the man you have so grossly injured," replied Barnard, "and who now seeks his revenge."

"I," returned the colonel, in surprise; "I never yet wronged any one. Sure you must be mistaken in your victim."

"No, no," cried Barnard, with a savage grin, "all is right; the name of Grenville is not unknown to you, I dare say."

"Merciful Heaven!" ejaculated the colonel, "to what lengths will his villainy carry him!—What is it he seeks?"

"Your life," returned Barnard, with the most careless composure; "it is here you meet your doom. In a few hours it will be midnight; at that time you die; so prepare yourself."

"Cowardly wretch!" cried the agonized colonel, "shall I, who have been opposed to armies, fear thy single arm?—shall I tamely submit to murder?"

He advanced towards Barnard, who, presenting the pistol to his head, threat-

ened instantly to fire if he offered any resistance.—“Provoke not your fate,” he cried; “a few hours I yet give you for reflection; when the midnight-bell tolls, then again expect me; that hour will be your last; so prepare for death.” He then disappeared, carefully securing the door after him.

The feelings of the agonized colonel were now almost past endurance, as no means of escape presented itself. Unarmed and defenceless as he was, he knew resistance would be vain; yet he determined not tamely to yield to his assassin: but even hope forsook him in this hour of horror; he saw plainly that his death was decided on by the villain Grenville; and under the impression of the dreadful fate which awaited him, he wrote with a pencil, which he had in his pocket, those sentences upon the couch which have before been recorded.

At length the shadows of night stole quickly over his head, and darkness encompassed the chamber: dreadful were his

feelings as midnight approached: a distant bell proclaimed the hour, which broke in dismal accents on his ear; and when he at last counted eleven, his blood ran chill with horror.—“One little hour,” he cried, “and I have spun my short existence.—Oh, my wife, my child! shall we never meet again? Oh yes, assuredly we shall, in another and a better world; there shall we be reunited. Let me then employ the short residue of my life in imploring Heaven to protect thee from thy cruel foe, Oh, merciful Father!” he continued, sinking on his knee, “to thy care I commit the dearest pledges of my heart: give me thy support in this time of need, and grant that my soul, in anticipating the joys of heaven, may feel less poignancy in this my earthly fate; and if it is thy Divine pleasure that I fall by the hand of my midnight assassin, vouchsafe to reopen my closed eyes unto light and liberty, and everlasting life.”

CHAPTER VIII.  
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HE was interrupted in his devotions by a gleam of light which shot across his chamber; and thinking that his destroyer was entering the room, he arose from his knees; but he was in an instant after convinced of his mistake, by a long and heavy peal of thunder which broke upon his ears, and the lightning gleamed in quick succession through the windows. The wind and rain raged with violence, as if in unison with the black deed about to be committed. It was indeed a fearful night; the storm increased, and threatened destruction to the ruinous tower. The colonel stood calm amidst the shock; he almost welcomed it, in the idea that it might bring the tottering fabric to the ground; and even if he perished with it, it were better than falling by the hand of his as-

assassin. His hopes were vain; the bell struck the hour of twelve, and in a few minutes Barnard entered the room; in one hand he held a dagger, and in the other a dark lantern, while the lightning gleaming most horribly across his face, rendered his appearance doubly terrific.—“Are you prepared?” said he, in a hollow tone.

“Not to die by thy hands,” said the colonel, at the same time furiously seizing him, and endeavouring to force the dagger from his hand. The contest was violent, while the elements, as if in anger at this savage scene, became more and more convulsed.—“Forbear!” exclaimed the colonel, “and tremble at that Power which can in an instant hurl destruction on thy head; proceed no farther in this horrid deed, lest thou thyself fall the sacrifice.”

Barnard did indeed tremble; though involved in many crimes, it was the first attempt at murder. He paused, and would fain have retracted; but it was too late; he recollected his vow to fulfil the orders of Grenville, in whose power he knew he

was : he therefore recovered himself, and darted upon the colonel with the dagger. The lamp fell from his hand in the struggle, but he felt the weapon pierce his victim, who, groaning deeply, fell to the ground. The lightning now again flashing, shewed him the form of the hapless colonel, prostrate on the ground, weltering in his blood. He stood for a moment, horror-struck at the deed; but fearing lest he had not completed his task, he was about to plunge the dagger a second time, when the thunder with redoubled violence shook the earth; the tower seemed falling about his ears, many parts of which he heard dashed to the ground; and in an instant after, a thunderbolt pierced through the apartment, and slightly grazed the shoulder of the now horror-struck Barnard, who sunk by the side of his victim.—“ Mercy ! mercy ! ” he frantically exclaimed ; “ but there is no mercy for a *murderer* ! Oh, would I could recall this deed ! ”

A sigh issued from the lips of the wounded colonel.



Barnard started up; it recalled him to action.—“ *He lives !*” he cried ; “ perhaps I may yet save his life.” He placed his hand upon his heart, and found it beat with quick motion : he spoke to the colonel, who, only faint with loss of blood, was able to make him a reply. The joy of Barnard was excessive ; but as his apprehensions were removed, he again thought on his own safety, and with his usual policy he raised the colonel in his arms ; and finding that the wound was not likely to be mortal, he expressed his determination to preserve his life, if he would bind himself by the most solemn oath to yield to his wishes. At such a moment as this the agonized colonel caught at the least gleam of hope, and bound himself by a sacred vow to submit to the terms dictated by Barnard, which were to consent to secrete himself *for ever* in the ruinous abbey, while Grenville was to be assured of his death. This proposal, though dreadful, was acceded to by the colonel, who, to confess the truth, secretly



hoped that he should have some opportunity of escape; for he considered an oath forced from him under such circumstances as of no avail in the eyes of a merciful and just Power, whose almighty providence had that night intervened to save him from destruction.

Barnard, well pleased with his compliance, now assisted him to the couch, where he begged him to remain a few minutes, while he went to procure a light. The wound which the colonel had received was but slight; the dagger had penetrated into his breast, from which the blood flowed profusely, and which of course rendered him weak and faint. On the return of Barnard with a light, he examined the wound, and succeeded in stopping the blood, and binding up the orifice, besought him to rest himself on the couch, and giving him some refreshments, left him to himself, with a promise to come again in a few hours.

The colonel, left to himself, returned thanks to Providence for his miraculous

preservation ; and he resolved, if possible, to preserve his existence, for the sake of his wife and child, to whom he hoped he might yet be able to return.

On the following morning Barnard again made his appearance, bringing with him a comfortable repast, of which the colonel partook. His wound he also dressed with great care, and evinced the utmost anxiety to save his life. But not all the entreaties, the offers of reward, which were made by the colonel for his escape, could move the heart of Barnard ; he reminded him of the terms prescribed, and the conditions of his preservation, which he swore never to depart from ; and the colonel was obliged to submit to his decree. Barnard now desired him to take his arm, as he was going to conduct him, he said, to a more habitable apartment, and where he would be concealed from human eye. He then led him down the tottering steps to the bottom of the tower ; and after crossing various mouldering ruins, the colonel beheld at length that they were in an im-

mense hall. Barnard led him in silence to the farther end, and stopped before a kind of tomb, which stood erect against the wall; on this was placed the figure of death, which, to his amazement, he saw move. But the mystery was soon unravelled; the arrow which it held in its hand was a concealed spring, which being pressed upon, gave way, and the mock tomb opening, discovered it to be a private entrance to another chamber; through this door they passed, and the colonel, to his surprise, beheld a room in better repair than he could imagine; a comfortable fire was burning, and all the necessary articles of furniture were arranged. —“There,” said Barnard, “you perceive that I have not been unmindful of your comfort: in this apartment I have many a time concealed myself from the arm of justice; it is an abode no one can penetrate, and here you may pass the rest of your days in peace and comfort.”

The colonel shuddered at this prospect; but thinking it better to acquiesce than

to provoke his enemy, he remained in silence.

"You need not fear," resumed Barnard, "while you yield tamely to my wishes, that you shall want for any thing. I will take care to provide you with the comforts of life. It is my intention to reside in the lodge belonging to the abbey, where I can always be on the watch; and the country people are all too afraid of these ruins to give me much molestation, while I shall make it my business to increase their terror as much as possible."

This plan was put into execution by Barnard, who now wrote to Grenville, and assured him of the death of his victim, and, claiming the promised reward, expressed his intention of residing in the lodge.

The joy of Grenville on the receipt of this letter was that of a demoniac spirit, who rejoices in his iniquity.—"Now, now I am revenged!" he exultingly exclaimed; "now who triumphs? the haughty Rosa in her turn feels the keen anguish of de-

spair which she inflicted on me—it is well—I am satisfied."

The stipulated reward was immediately forwarded to Barnard, with expressions of gratitude from Grenville for his diligence and fidelity. In the midst, however, of his savage exultation for the work of others, he was doomed to receive an affliction himself; for as if to punish him for his infamous proceedings, his wife was seized with a fever, which terminated her life in a few days.

This event would not perhaps have caused the worthless Grenville much sorrow, but on her decease her property was to descend to her offspring; and thus the ambitious husband was again deprived of that wealth which had so many charms in his eyes. She had borne him one child, a son, who was quite an infant when deprived of the care of its mother; and under the guidance of such a father much was to be feared.

The little Hubert was a healthy infant, while its dimpled rosy face displayed fea-



tures which promised at a future period to exhibit manly beauty. Too indolent, and too devoid of natural affection, to attend to the wants of a child, Grenville placed it under the care of a nurse during its infancy; and as it advanced in years, proper persons were appointed to superintend his education; and perhaps this was the kindest action the unworthy father could have done; for Hubert, under the guidance of honourable men, had examples of goodness set before him, which he never could have received from his unprincipled father, who was now again plunging into all his favourite vices.

But let us now turn to the abode of the virtuous but suffering Mrs. Sedley, whose feelings, since the mysterious absence of her husband, may be easily imagined. For the first few weeks her mind almost sunk beneath the weight of her affliction, and as each fresh pursuit, each fresh reward, were offered, so her spirits arose, and forsook her as disappointment only followed: let any one conceive the distraction of an

wish was formed in the bosom of the latter, but was approved by the fond mother, nor a thought concealed in the bosom of the pure and innocent Rosa. Happy time! when no invidious cares arise to disturb the hours of youth, when all is calm within, and filial love the only passion which controls the heart! Could this pleasing dream continue, it would make our earth a paradise; but it is ordered otherwise; each has their different probation to fill, and he who best performs the task allotted, shall reap the rich reward of all his labours, and receive that promise which can alone support the afflicted during their journey through the vale of tears.

An incident soon arose, which, though trifling in its first appearance, led the way for the future misery of our lovely heroine, who now, at the age of eighteen, needed only to be seen to be admired; but like the modest violet, shrinking from public gaze, she escaped from the arts of many who would have marked her for



their prey; yet she had been seen by one whose eyes were often, though secretly, rivetted on her charms, and on whose heart the fascinating girl had made a deep impression, without being conscious of her power.

The beautiful grounds of Mrs. Sedley were joined by those belonging to a nursery, and only divided on one side by a light fence, which had been pleasing to Mrs. Sedley, as improving her view, in being able to watch the beauteous shrubs and plants which were reared in this extensive ground. The proprietor's house was most beautifully situated in his garden, and the air was so extremely salubrious and healthy, that he was in the habit of letting rooms for the accommodation of invalids; and Mrs. Sedley had often commiserated with the declining in their sufferings, as they, with weak steps, were enjoying the benefit of the shrubbery.

On the present occasion they had observed a young man of genteel appear-

ance walking in the grounds; and though his countenance wore the stamp of ill health, yet there was an air of gracefulness about his person, which could not be concealed by illness; and his features, though languid, were remarkably handsome. As Rosa was fond of the beauties of nature, she was frequently walking in her own grounds, and had attracted the notice of the invalid, who found a pleasure in gazing on her that softened the pangs of sickness, while Rosa remained unconscious of the circumstance; until at length one morning, on looking over into the nursery, she beheld the stranger, who was steadfastly gazing at her—their eyes met—while Rosa, confused and trembling she knew not why, endeavoured to return the very polite bow which he instantly made her, and immediately retired through a shady walk which hid her from observation.

When out of his sight, she accused herself as wanting in humanity, in not having made an inquiry as to his health;

but still she felt she had not the courage so to do; and what was still more surprising, on joining her mother she could not bring herself to speak of the stranger, as she had formerly done of others.

From this period their meetings became more frequent; but as Mrs. Sedley mostly accompanied her daughter, her presence sanctioned the conversations which now arose, as Mrs. Sedley, with her usual goodness of heart, made inquiries as to his health, which now evidently amended; and as the lily gave place to the rose in his cheeks, betrayed the handsome face which sickness had for a while concealed: his answers were replete with affability and sense, while the easy elegance of his person and manners evinced the gentleman, and to the eyes of Rosa he seemed the most fascinating of his sex.

In this manner was a trifling intimacy formed, which in its first onset appeared as totally unattended with danger, and founded on the purest motives of sympathy, innocence, and virtue.

## CHAPTER IX.

It was one morning that Mrs. Sedley, with her usual benevolence, inquired of the stranger, as they met in the grounds, as to the state of his health, and delicately reverted to his situation, by expressing her hopes that he had every attention and comfort requisite to his present weak state?

A ray of pleasure beamed in his eyes, as, expressive of his thanks, he assured her that he had every necessary, and even luxury, which wealth could purchase—that he had his own servant with him, therefore had every attendance necessary—“But,” added he, with warmth, “until now I never experienced the pleasure of female solicitude—that heavenly balm, which blesses the life of man, has hitherto been denied me; but the kindness, ma-

dam, bestowed on me by yourself and amiable daughter, will ever afford me the highest satisfaction."

Mrs. Sedley bowed.—" I cannot, sir, accept of thanks which I do not merit; humanity prompted the inquiries I made; but I rejoice to find that you are placed beyond the want of my assistance; and at the same time accept my best wishes that you may find your health restored by this salubrious air."

" I already feel its good effects, madam," he replied; " nor do I think I shall be inclined at present to quit a spot which possesses so many charms for me. Deprived in my infancy of the care of a mother, and little attended to by my father, I have never experienced the sweet delights of parental affection; sent at an early age to college, study became my chief delight, which I fear has proved injurious to my health, since I fell a victim to illness; a severe fever was the result, which I however struggled through, and by the advice

of my physician, sought change of air; I had no mother, no sister, to sooth my sufferings; all places were alike to me; and being informed of this charming spot by a person who had already experienced its good effects, I ordered my valet to procure me accommodation, which he fortunately obtained; and I have the satisfaction of finding my health and strength daily amend."

Mrs. Sedley congratulated him on his restoration, and the conversation took a different turn; but with the keen eyes of an anxious mother, she observed the attention which he paid to Rosa. On addressing her, there was an air of tenderness, an expression beaming from the eye, which bespoke more than the language of a mere acquaintance.

Mrs. Sedley trembled for the result, as she also beheld the burning blushes, the averted eye of her daughter, in return to his address; and when he gracefully presented her with some choice exotics, her



trembling hand could hardly receive the gift.

Mrs. Sedley looked grave; doubts and fears assailed her bosom; it was true he was formed to please and captivate, and appeared as most amiable; but he was a stranger—of himself or his connexions they knew nothing—and she resolved for the future to avoid the meetings with him as much as possible.

While she was thus musing, a child approached from the house with haste, and running up to the stranger, exclaimed—  
“*Mr. Grenville*, here is a letter for you, sir.”

At the sound of this name, an electrical shock seemed to run through the frame of Mrs. Sedley; her cheek assumed an ashy paleness, her lips quivered, as taking the hand of Rosa, she endeavoured to hasten away.

Our heroine was also greatly agitated; the fatal name had sounded also upon her ears, and filled her bosom with apprehen-



sion.—“ You are ill, my dear mamma,” she cried ; “ suffer me to support you.”

“ We will return to the house,” she replied, as, bowing with great reserve to Mr. Grenville, she turned away.

With the utmost politeness he expressed his regret at her indisposition ; and with the unopened letter in his hand, he stood gazing after the lovely form of Rosa, until the trees shaded her from his sight.

When in the drawing-room, Mrs. Sedley burst into tears.—“ That name,” she cried, “ has the power to rend my soul with anguish ! Alas, my dear girl, I felt some painful sensation always when conversing with this young man, which I could not define ; the reason is now explained, and we must cautiously avoid any farther intercourse with him.”

The cheek of Rosa grew as pale as her mother’s.—“ But, my dear mamma,” she cried, “ you may be mistaken in your supposition, which I of course enter into. Your fears may be vain, and this Mr.

Grenville no part of that family which you have so much cause to dislike."

Mrs. Sedley shook her head—"It is too clear," she replied; "the account which he has just given of himself proves the truth; the death of his mother, and the way in which he spoke of his father, convinces me he is the son of my bitterest enemy; therefore, I repeat, we must for the future avoid all farther intercourse, as the consequences cannot fail of being distressing in the end."

"And yet," said Rosa, "to treat him with sudden rudeness, with marked coldness, after his polite attentions, would not, I think, be quite right. I am sure, my dear mother, you are too just to act thus on suspicion; let us endeavour to ascertain the fact before we entirely withdraw ourselves."

"It is as I feared," interrupted the agonized mother; "your hopes are fixed on this young man, and your fancy gets the better of reason; but mark me, my dear girl, if you value your future happiness for

life, shun all connexion with a family who has sought the ruin of your mother. You know not the implacable, the revengeful disposition of the elder Grenville, else would you shudder at the idea of any intercourse whatever. Years have now rolled on since I have met with him, and I had hoped to have passed the remainder of my life beyond even the reach of his name; but since it has accidentally broke upon our ears, let us endeavour to banish the disagreeable sound. This young man will no doubt, as his health amends, quit this spot, and by his absence remove those fears which now arise in my bosom. It is for you, my beloved child, that I tremble; oh then, give peace to thy mother's heart, and assure me you will think no more of this dangerous stranger."

She threw her arms about her daughter, and for some minutes they mingled their tears together.

"I will do all you wish, my beloved mother," cried the agitated girl; "only let me see you happy, and I ask no more;

what is all the world to me; compared to your peace of mind?"

"On your promise I rely," replied Mrs. Sedley. "We have only in future to avoid this enemy to our repose, and all will be well again."

Rosa sighed and remained in silence; and from that hour she obeyed her mother by absenting herself from the garden. But the effort cost her much; unconsciously the passion of love had crept into her bosom; and now that it was forbidden, raged with redoubled violence.

The unhappy mother saw with concern the alteration in her daughter's spirits. She both pitied and admired the struggles which evidently passed in her bosom, between contending passions, and she dreaded what would be the result. For the sake of so beloved a child, she would have sacrificed almost any thing; but could she hope, that by uniting her to a descendant of Grenville, that she would be happy? oh no! it was impossible! it was like ren-

dering a lamb to the jaws of the wolf—since she believed her destruction would be certain in any intercourse with Grenville.

But, alas! the fatal die was cast, and Rosa was a victim to ill-fated love. Often would she, in the calm of an evening, retire to her own room, from whence she could have a view of the nursery-grounds; here, concealed from observation, she would gaze on that form, whose presence she was denied—here she frequently beheld Grenville walking dejectedly, and as she fancied, anxiously looking towards those walks where she used to meet him.—“Alas!” sighed she, “what must he think of our conduct, after all his polite attentions; to treat him thus, to avoid him, to fly from him as our greatest evil! Oh, my mother! for the first time I feel thy commands are painful! Surely, whatever may be the errors of the father, they have not descended to the son—such a countenance as that cannot conceal a depraved nature.”



She burst into tears; when, as if by sympathy, she observed at that moment that young Grenville passed his hand to his forehead, as if in agony of disappointment; and once more leaning over the thin railing which separated the grounds, and taking a survey, he suddenly darted away, as if in despair.

Rosa also retired from the window, in a state of dejection and uneasiness. Thus passed on a short time, when one day, as Rosa and her mother were sitting together, a servant announced the name of Mr. Grenville.

Mrs. Sedley looked much embarrassed, which was increased by observing the pale cheek and quivering lips of her daughter, whom she immediately requested to retire.

Although Rosa had previously sighed for his presence, yet in this moment she felt her inability to an interview, and therefore gladly left the room.

Mrs. Sedley then ordered him to be shewn in; and in a few moments he enter-

ed, with a grace and elegance of manner sufficient to prepossess any one in his favour.

Mrs. Sedley rather coldly bowed, but begged him to be seated.

"I hope, madam," he cried, "this visit will not be deemed as intrusive; but I have in vain endeavoured to see either you or your daughter since the morning of your sudden indisposition in the garden, and fearing you were a victim to illness, I have taken the liberty of making this personal inquiry."

Mrs. Sedley thanked him for his attention, but assured him her absence from the garden had not been occasioned through ill health.

Grenville looked embarrassed.—"May I then venture to inquire, madam, after your lovely daughter?"

"She is well, sir," returned Mrs. Sedley, coldly.

A deep pause ensued, and both parties evidently laboured under a restraint. At length Grenville, with a countenance of



anxiety, exclaimed—"I fear, madam, I have been so unfortunate as to fall under your displeasure, since I cannot but mark the alteration in your manner, as in our first interviews your conduct towards me was such as will ever be engraven on my remembrance; your kindness, your compassion for my then weak state, demands my utmost gratitude. Insensible must I then be, if I could perceive this visible alteration without feeling it most acutely. Say then, dear madam, why have I fallen so beneath your displeasure?"

Mrs. Sedley was affected, as she assured him *he had not* offended her.

"Then why this sudden coldness," he cried, "so destructive to all my hopes of happiness, which are now centered in your approbation? Circumstances, madam, impel me to an avowal which may perhaps appear as premature; but where the heart is dictated by honour, and the purest love, it scorns dissimulation and concealment. To see your lovely daughter, madam, was to admire, and to converse with her, to

adore her. I have seen enough of her to convince me that she is the only female formed by nature to make me blest. Do not view this declaration as the result of a love-sick fancy; time has proved the firmness of my affection, which nothing can ever obliterate; and emboldened by the strength of my love, I thus presume to lay my hand and fortune at her feet."

"It must not be, sir," cried Mrs. Sedley, greatly agitated, as she beheld the ingenuous countenance of Grenville, which glowed with ardour and love. "There are reasons, sir," she continued, "of the strongest nature which forbid such an union; endeavour therefore, for your own peace, to banish this fatal impression, since it can only tend to the destruction of both."

Young Grenville looked the picture of despair, — "I cannot comprehend you, madam," he cried; "what reasons can so strongly exist, unless indeed—I almost dread to ask a question so inimical to my peace—unless the affections of Miss Sedley are another's. In pity, madam, an-

swer me this question, and relieve the agony I endure."

Mrs. Sedley was affected at his visible agitation, and had he have been the son of any other than she supposed him, she would gladly have made him happy. She knew the heart of Rosa was his, but stern fate forbid such an avowal.—"Rest satisfied as to that point, sir," she replied; "my daughter has yet formed no attachment of that nature—she is free as air."

"Your words give me new life, madam," interrupted he, "since all other obstacles may be surmounted. My family, my fortune, I trust, are such as will not be deemed as insignificant in your eyes, although I am aware your daughter is entitled to the greatest honours which man can offer."

"It is not wealth I seek," cried Mrs. Sedley; "perish, sir, such an unworthy thought! But you spoke of your family, sir; will you favour me with a knowledge of it?"

... This was the question so dreaded by

Mrs. Sedley, and her agitation was too great to pass unobserved, as Grenville, in ignorance of the fatal cause, cheerfully explained his descent, and confirmed the dreaded truth, that he was indeed the son of her bitterest enemy.

"Enough, sir," she cried. "Now then hear the obstacles which exist. Have you no knowledge of my family, or the connexion it has had with yours?"

Grenville looked his surprise.—"None, madam," he replied; "I have not the least idea of your allusion."

"It is painful to me, sir," resumed Mrs. Sedley, "to speak to you of the failings of your parent, but circumstances compel me to be explicit; and when I have related all my injuries, say whether you will wonder at the objection I can have to such an alliance."

She then related to him the whole of his father's conduct towards herself, the mysterious disappearance of colonel Sedley, and her suspicions at the event.

Grenville was dreadfully shocked at the

recital, and assured her, that till this moment he had never been aware of such an event; that he knew his father to be devoid of those sweet feelings which generally unite a parent and a child, but that he had not supposed him capable of so much depravity.—“But,” added he, “I will see my father immediately—I will acquaint him with the whole truth. When he sees the happiness or misery of his son depends upon this alliance, he will perhaps soften his resentment, and through me atone for the errors he has committed to you. Say, madam,” he continued, “should I succeed, will you sanction my addresses? Oh, do not sacrifice the son for the faults of the father!”

“Alas!” said Mrs. Sedley, “you know him not so well as I do; you will find him implacable and revengeful. I tremble for the result of such an application.”

“Allow me to make the trial, at least,” said he. “Oh, doom me not to everlasting despair! for without my adored Rosa I feel I can never be happy.”



He continued to press upon the feelings of Mrs. Sedley, till she was almost incapable of giving him a denial. Her daughter's happiness was indeed dear to her heart, and she scarce knew which way to act.

" Ere long be commun'd with the mother mild—  
 ' Alas!' she said, ' I warn'd, conjur'd my child,  
 And griev'd for this affection from the first,  
 But, like fatality, it has been nurs'd."

Grenville now with ardent eloquence entreated permission to see Rosa.

Mrs. Sedley was greatly distressed; she felt she was acting against her own judgment, in allowing the interview. But Grenville pleaded so much, that she gave a reluctant consent; and Rosa was summoned to the drawing-room.

The trembling girl entered with downcast eyes; she knew not what to think or to hope; while Grenville, flying to her side, took her hand, and expressed his pleasure at seeing her. Rosa cast a look of inquiry towards her mother. She flattered herself that her objections were removed,

by having found her suspicions erroneous ; but her grave and dejected air immediately revealed the truth.

Grenville saw the blushes which mantled on the cheek of his fair enslaver ; he felt her hand tremble beneath his pressure, and in her bewitching eyes he read the language of her heart. He felt convinced that her affections were his, and he mentally resolved that no power on earth should part them.—“ Your mother, Miss Sedley,” said he, “ has informed me of a circumstance which until now I was in entire ignorance ; it has, of course, caused me the greatest pain. But hope surmounts all obstacles ; and, sanctioned by your mother, I shall immediately repair to my father, make known to him the state of my affections, and, I trust, return with joy to heal the breach which has so long subsisted between our families, by an union with the lovely object of my heart.”

“ Hold, sir !” cried Mrs. Sedley, “ I do not say I sanction such a step ; it is your



CHAPTER X.  
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GREATLY agitated by the unexpected communication which had been made, young Grenville immediately commenced his journey to town, and in the course of a few hours he was in his father's house.

Grenville expressed his surprise at his son's unexpected appearance; but congratulated him on his amended health. Hubert felt himself much agitated, and he scarcely knew how to introduce the subject upon which he came. At length, after a little preparatory conversation, he ventured to speak of the state of his affections. His father heard him out very placidly, as he described the object of his affections, as being lovely and rich; but when he spoke of her family, and entreated a reconciliation on the part of his father towards Mrs. Sedley, his rage burst

forth with all the natural violence of his temper.

Hubert was in some degree prepared for this, and he endeavoured to soften his resentment; but he soon found, that, as Mrs. Sedley had asserted, he had not as yet known his father. Choking with rage, he vented the bitterest curses on their heads, which he also vowed to extend to his unfortunate son, if he did not immediately renounce all thoughts of Rosa.—“Degenerate boy,” he cried, “would you wed with the offspring of her who has robbed me of my inheritance by her accursed arts? Did she not influence my father to disinherit me, while she was rioting in that wealth of which I was plundered?”

“Mrs. Sedley, sir,” said Hubert, “is incapable of such an act as that: from her own lips I have received the whole truth. Influenced by the merit of his ward, my grandfather was induced to dispose of his wealth as he did, and not through such

as the case of the poor

unworthy means as you impute to Mrs. Sedley."

"I see," cried Grenville, "you are also become her dupe; but mark me, sir—if you dare to encourage one more thought concerning this girl, my everlasting hatred and revenge shall follow you; for sooner than I would behold you united to a descendant of the hated Sedleys, I would see you a rolling corpse at my feet; and I swear that I would inflict the deadly wound myself, rather than you should ally yourself to the beings I hate with such inveteracy."

Shocked at this dreadful sentence, Hubert sunk on a chair overpowered. Hope now seemed to forsake him—no entreaties, no persuasions, could induce his father to recall his cruel vow. On the contrary, his rage grew more violent, and he ordered Hubert to quit his presence, and never more dare to intrude himself in his sight, until he had given over all thoughts of such an alliance.—"And mark me, sir," he added, in a voice of thunder, "if you

dare clandestinely to keep up any such an intercourse, I will mar your happiness for ever. All things are possible to a desperate man, and I will accomplish all I wish, even though I imbrue my hands in the blood of the object of your mistaken attachment."

Hubert, dreadfully shocked, rushed from the house of his father, who never once requested him to stay, although the evening was fast advancing. He ordered the postboy to drive to the nearest hotel; where he purposed resting for the night; but, alas! what were his reflections during the few hours that he endeavoured to court repose! The malediction of his father hung heavy on his mind, and the ill success with which he should return to his adored Rosa drove him almost to distraction. He felt he should find Mrs. Sedley as inexorable as his father, in regard to the alliance, and her mild and persuasive arguments were a greater obstacle than his father's dreadful threats.

who he considered had now, by his conduct, forfeited all claims to his obedience. A ray of hope passed across his heart as he recollected he was independent : of his father. The wealth of his mother was his, at his own disposal, and if he could but gain the consent of Mrs. Sedley to an union with Rosa, he might yet be happy. On this hope he now rested ; and early on the following morning he threw himself into a travelling chaise, and soon arrived at the nursery.

During his short absence, the agitation of poor Rosa had been excessive, and her anxious mother beheld that the happiness of her daughter depended upon an union which made her shudder, as she could not bring herself to believe that any prospect of bliss would arise from a connexion of the family of Grenville ; and she already blamed herself for having at all acquiesced in the wishes of Hubert, in making the proposals to his father ; and when he again presented himself before them, she immediately read in his dejected counte-

nance: the entire failure of his hopes. He softened as much as possible the conduct of his father; but Mrs. Sedley readily guessed the reception with which he had met.

The feelings of Rosa were too great for utterance. She remained in silence, but her pale cheek and quivering lip betrayed the emotion of her heart.

Hubert took her passive hand, which she had not the power to withdraw.—“Dearest Rosa,” he passionately exclaimed, “do not let me be the means of bringing misery only to your gentle bosom. What is there I would not do or sacrifice to gain your affections? One way is still left: my fortune is ample—I am my own master—my father has forfeited all claim to my obedience. What then remains to divide us? Thus, then, in the presence of your mother, I again offer you my hand, and trust that you will not reject the entreaties of him whose happiness or misery lies in your hands; and

you, madam," said he, addressing Mrs. Sedley, "will not have the cruelty to reject my suit. Oh, say but that you will consent to give me your angelic daughter, and relieve me from torture!"

"It must not be, sir," said Mrs. Sedley; "I never can consent to a clandestine union. I have already suffered too much from the revenge of your father, who would not, I am convinced, stop at any thing to destroy the happiness of an offspring of mine, if once in his power; therefore, though I pity your intense feelings, yet the duty of a parent compels me to declare, that from this moment I can no longer sanction your proposals; and for the further peace of both, it is necessary you do not meet again; and I trust you have too much honour to seek any farther interviews, so contrary to my positive wishes."

Hubert sunk on a chair.—"You have given the fatal blow to my last hope," said he; "but however, madam, you may deny me the presence of your daugh-



but it is impossible I can ever cease to love her. You know me not, if you suppose it is a mere passion of fancy which time will obliterate. I feel too assuredly the deep hold which it has upon my heart; and though banished from your presence, you will perhaps deign to commiserate those sufferings which will one day meet you here. See," he cried, "your angel daughter weeps already for my woes. Oh, would I might dare to change those pearly drops to happiness and love!"

"Desist, sir," said Mrs. Sedley; "the scene grows too painful to bear; I must request you will retire." Again he implored her to recant her resolution. Mrs. Sedley wept at his sufferings; hers was indeed an arduous task; she beheld her daughter before her bathed in tears, while her lover looked the image of despair; and what rendered it still more distressing, was her belief that Hubert was indeed amiable as her utmost wishes could have formed a being to make her daughter

happy: but the obstacle was too great to overcome, and she persisted in her resolution; and Hubert at length found himself compelled to quit the presence of her whom he now loved to distraction. He frantically caught her hand, and pressed it to his lips, and with hurried accents murmured out an adieu, and rushed from the house, while Rosa, who had endeavoured to support herself in his presence, now sunk fainting on a chair.

The agonized mother bent over her child in a state of anguish. Gladly would she have resigned her own life to have promoted the happiness of so beloved a child; but she felt, however painful the task now was, it would save her from future misery. Great was, however, the struggle with which she had to contend, as she beheld the sufferings of the afflicted girl; Time, that general physician, did not in the least seem to soften her grief; a dejection and languor stole over her frame; and Mrs. Sedley beheld, with real concern, the ravages made in her health.

All the fond persuasions and mild entreaties that she could advance were heard by Rosa with gratitude and obedience; she never opposed the will of her mother, or ever attempted to gain an interview with the object of her affections, who, they heard, through the medium of servants, still continued at the nursery, in a very weak and low state; but the pang of hopeless love rankled at her heart, and was fast undermining her constitution.

Mrs. Sedley resolved to absent herself for a time from her seclusion, and try of what avail change of scene would prove; while to Rosa this resolution caused the greatest pain, as, though she despaired of ever seeing Hubert again, yet she could not bear to quit the spot where she knew he yet was. But a circumstance soon arose to prevent the design of Mrs. Sedley. It was one night, after all the family had retired to rest, that she awoke from her sleep by an unusual noise, of which she could not ascertain the cause; but a strong smell of burning prompted her to arise,

and on opening her chamber-door, she beheld, to her extreme terror, that the house was on fire. Screaming violently, she gave the alarm, and in a few minutes the domestics were all assembled from their respective rooms.

The affrighted mother called upon the name of her child, who did not as yet appear. In an agony of mind she rushed towards the chamber where she slept; but to her horror, she beheld the flight of stairs which ascended to it, and which were detached from the general staircase, in flames, and impassable. She heard the shrieks of Rosa, imploring for assistance; while the frantic mother vainly endeavoured to ascend the stairs. The domestics forced her from the spot, and besought her to escape to the garden, while yet it was in her power, where they would rescue Miss Sedley from the window.

With feelings better imagined than described, Mrs. Sedley was forced away. The alarm was now, of course, become general, and numbers of persons were

flocking to their assistance. The inhabitants of the nursery were aroused from their slumbers, and before Mrs. Sedley was aware, the form of Grenville stood before her.—“Where—where is Rosa?” he exclaimed, catching her hand.

“Oh, save her! save her!” cried the agonized mother; “she yet remains within her room.”

“Ah, Rosa in danger!” he replied—“farewell, madam! I save her, or perish with her.”

He rushed from her, and darted towards the house. In vain the by-standers called to him to desist, as they proposed to rescue the lady from the window, as they feared that his own life must fall the sacrifice. What a moment was this for a mother! her senses almost forsook her, and she stood in a state of stupor, until a violent shout roused her from her lethargy. She gazed wildly around, when in the next instant she again beheld the pale form of Hubert rushing through the



crowd. In his arms he bore an almost lifeless burden, which he presented to Mrs. Sedley, exclaiming—"Your daughter, madam, and in safety!"

Mrs. Sedley caught the senseless Rosa in her arms, and in an ecstasy of joy poured out thanks to her brave deliverer, who now begged she would immediately repair to the nursery for rest and safety. She complied, and Hubert endeavoured to support both mother and daughter; but she now saw, with great concern, that he was suffering pain from his hands, which were burnt violently. Unmindful of danger, he had rushed up the staircase which led to the chamber of Rosa. In vain the flames opposed his progress; with his hands he baffled them away, and reached the apartment just as the terrified girl had given herself over for lost, and sinking into a state of insensibility. She knew not, for some time, who her deliverer was; but who shall describe her feelings, on coming to herself, to find she was in the presence of her mother, and

supported by Hubert! she heard Mrs. Sedley invoking blessings upon his head for the vast obligation she owed him.

"I am already richly repaid, madam," he replied; "life possesses not one charm for me, therefore death with Rosa would have been most welcome."

"Oh, say not so," cried Mrs. Sedley, thrown at this moment off her guard by the acuteness of her feelings; "you may yet be happy—you alone are worthy the object you have thus so bravely preserved."

Joy gleamed upon the pallid face of Hubert as he was about to reply, when Mrs. Sedley begged him to have assistance for the severe injury he had sustained in his hands; but scarcely did he feel the pain which he really endured, since Rosa, the angelic Rosa, dropped the tear of commiseration for his sufferings.

The mistress of the house now entreated that Mrs. and Miss Sedley would repair to a chamber, and endeavour to recover from the effects of their late agitation, and likewise at the joint entreaties



of Hubert, they complied; although Mrs. Sedley, still in a state of great anxiety, repaired to the window, to watch the destruction raging at her late abode.

Through timely assistance, the flames were got under; but the next morning, it was found the damage was too great in the interior of the building to admit of Mrs. Sedley returning immediately, until it could be properly repaired. The accident was supposed to be occasioned by the carelessness of some of the domestics, in dropping a spark from a candle as they retired to rest. As there were vacant apartments at the nursery, Mrs. Sedley was prevailed upon to remain there until she could return to her own house; thus, by a singular and unexpected event, Rosa and her lover were now thrown under the same roof.

Mrs. Sedley attended herself, with the greatest solicitude, to the wounds of Hubert, who regarded them as the most fortunate he had ever sustained. Mrs. Sedley now looked upon him as the preserver.

of her child, in which character it was impossible to treat him with reserve; and as she had an opportunity of witnessing the amiability of his temper, she soon felt an affection for him almost maternal; and will it not readily be believed, that the sentiments of the daughter were in unison with her mother? She now felt the most impassioned affection, while, on his part, he regarded her with a love bordering on adoration. Again the stamp of health adorned his countenance; he was allowed to breathe vows of love into her ear, which were not forbid by Mrs. Sedley; and when he once more ventured to propose an union with Rosa, the fond mother, smiling through her tears, gave a half-reluctant consent.—“I owe you too much,” she replied, “to deny you any thing which regards your happiness; you have preserved the life of my child. My feelings, at that moment of danger, can never be forgotten by me—you demand my utmost gratitude; take then my beloved girl—she is yours, and may my prayers

reach the Throne of Mercy in behalf of your inexorable father, and grant that his heart may yet be softened in your favour!"

The joy of Hubert can better be imagined than described; he threw himself at her feet, and poured out thanks of rapture, while the blushing Rosa could scarcely believe her happiness as real; to be bestowed on the man of her heart, with the approbation of her mother, was joy too great for utterance, and in silence, that most expressive eloquence, she evinced the bliss which she felt.

Time flew rapidly on with the lovers, in calm delight; the hands of Hubert were now healed, and he besought to lead his Rosa to the altar. Mrs. Sedley, however, insisted on one more application being made to his father—"Justice to myself demands it," she cried; "I am already accused by him of influencing, by my arts, the conduct of his father. In the event of your private union, I shall again have a similar charge laid to me; therefore inform him of your intended

nuptials, to which assure him I have had the strongest objection. Circumstances alone have induced me to alter my resolution; and to shew my gratitude to you, I am willing to meet your father upon amicable terms, if he will give his consent to your marriage."

Hubert thankfully agreed to this proposal, provided that on a second failure with his father, she would not recant her promise in bestowing her daughter.

She assured him she would not; and the delighted Hubert now looked forward to scenes alone of happiness and love, in the hopes of soon receiving the hand of his amiable and lovely Rosa.

CHAPTER XI.  
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THE residence of Mrs. Sedley at length being repaired, and fit for her reception, she, with her daughter, once more returned to their home; and on their leaving the nursery, Hubert, taking a tender farewell of his destined bride, commenced his journey to town, in order to comply with the wishes of Mrs. Sedley, relative to his father. Mr. Grenville received him with a coldness which chilled the heart of Hubert, and he saw from his sternness that he had nothing to hope. He led to the subject himself, by expressing his hope, that as his son had thus thrown himself before him again, it was to assure him that he had abandoned all thoughts of the detestable connexion of which he had before spoken.

"So far from it, sir," replied Hubert,

in a calm but steady tone, "that I have come, for the last time, to inform you of my future intentions. I would wish still to evince my duty, by once more soliciting your consent to an union——"

"Never!" passionately interrupted he. "You already know my sentiments on that head, which I will never recall."

"Then, sir, hear my determination," replied Hubert, in a resolute tone, "when I affirm, that no power on earth shall part us. I have waited upon you once more, at the pressing request of Mrs. Sedley, that you shall not accuse her again of artifice, in the event of an union with her daughter." He then proceeded to inform his father of every particular; the offer of Mrs. Sedley to be reconciled to him; and his determination of uniting himself to Rosa, even at the risk of his everlasting displeasure.

Rage kept the elder Grenville silent for a few moments, but he paced the room with a violence which almost shook the courage of Hubert; his eyes flashed fire,



and he was about to vent curses on the head of his son, when art suggested what affection could not; he saw that his power was at an end—that his threats were defied—and that dissimulation was now his only resource; checking therefore his rage, he stopped before his son.—“Hubert,” said he, “you cannot but suppose, after my former objections, that this intended alliance of yours costs me much anguish: but to convince you of my sincere regard, I will endeavour to repress all private feelings for the injuries I have sustained; meet me again in half-an-hour, and I will give you my final answer.”

Hubert was softened, and he retired to another apartment; the hope of reconciling his father to Mrs. Sedley was hailed with delight, and he anticipated the joy he should feel in returning with the agreeable news that he had gained the consent of his father. Not one feeling of this kind however actuated the bosom of the unworthy Grenville, whose only motive for this request was, that he might form some



plan in his own mind, by which he could separate the lovers for ever. He soon hit upon a scheme which he thought was likely to assist his designs, and he once more summoned his son before him.—“Hubert,” said he, at the same time extending his hand, “I have been fully weighing the subject in my mind, and it has cost me much to combat the resolution I had formed; but your happiness is dearer to me than my own, and I will yield to your entreaties.”

“Is it possible, sir,” cried the delighted Hubert: “oh, how can I thank you for this indulgence! May I then hope that you will cancel all animosity towards Mrs. Sedley, and that I may convey to her the pleasing intelligence?”

“You may,” returned Grenville; “but you cannot suppose that I can all at once bring my feelings to this point after so long an enmity; I must have time to conquer the prejudices I have formed. You know not, Hubert, the sacrifice I make to promote your happiness; and I

do expect, in your turn, you will oblige me, by shewing your gratitude."

"Any way, my father," replied the unsuspecting youth. "What is there I would not do, to repay this goodness on your part! only say your wishes, and I will obey."

"Enough," returned the artful Grenville: "I have long had it in contemplation to propose to you a commission, which I wished you to undertake for me, and which of course must now be performed before your marriage. You know I have estates and property in Holland, which require personal attendance; and as I do not feel adequate to the journey myself, I entreat, as a favour, that you will repair there for me. A few short months will be all it will require on your part, during which time I will, in reward for your obedience, bring my mind to the wished-for reconciliation; and on your return, you shall be united to your Rosa, with my full approbation and consent." said The countenance of Hubert underwent

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sanctioned by his father, he came to claim his destined bride.

“Is it possible?” she cried: “and does he indeed relent?”

“He does; and I am blest indeed!”

The agitation of Rosa was excessive; she besought him to repair to her mother, whom he had not yet seen, and together they returned to the house.

Mrs. Sedley was astonished at hearing of the compliance of Grenville; but on Hubert mentioning the conditions, she inwardly feared some treachery, but forbore to wound the feelings of the youthful pair on vague suspicions; she therefore advised Hubert to comply with the wishes of his father, while Rosa heard with great agitation the proposal of separation: a thousand fears seemed to assail her bosom, and she dreaded the idea of this proposed journey. Hubert also participated in her anxiety, as leaving her was a blow to which he was hardly competent; and after a short time had elapsed, he declared that he could not think of quitting her.

Rosa was alarmed; she feared the vengeance of his father, if she were the means of preventing his son's compliance; and therefore concealing her own feelings, she besought him to comply.

Meantime letters were continually arriving from Grenville to his son, urging him to commence his journey, as all things were now arranged preparatory; and finally wrote to inform him that a ship was about to sail for Holland, and that he should expect him to embark.

The dreaded time was now arrived—Mrs. Sedley used every expression in her power to comfort the sorrowing pair, but words were of no avail. Urged by the violence of his love, Hubert entreated he might receive the hand of Rosa as his own before he left his native land. To this Mrs. Sedley would not consent—"Why," she cried, "would you seek for a clandestine union, when you are about to make such a sacrifice for an honourable one? No, my dear Hubert, obey the commands of your father; while I will support your

afflicted Rosa during your absence, should heaven preserve my life; if not, receive now my full assurances of entire approbation; and remember, to your care I commit the happiness of my darling child."

Hubert was affected—he forbore to press his suit any farther; while embracing the weeping Rosa, he vowed to fulfil the sacred charge; but though he was guided by the purest motives of honour, what will not a lover do to gain the object of his affections! To the ears of Rosa alone he whispered his fears, his hopes; he entreated her to become his before he left her; and at length vowed he would not quit her, unless she would privately give him her hand.

Alas! how shall we account for the weakness of human nature! Rosa, who had hitherto never concealed an action of her life from her beloved parent, won over by the fond entreaties of her fascinating lover, yielded to his wishes; and meeting him at a church not far distant, actually became his bride.



No sooner however was the ceremony over, than all her fears arose to overpower, and when she met her mother, she almost sunk beneath her presence like a guilty criminal. To describe the rapture of Hubert is impossible—he felt light as air; while the unsuspecting mother had no idea of the feelings which actuated both. Rosa was wretched; the idea of deceiving her parent was dreadful in her eyes, and outweighed every other trouble; unused to dissimulation, the task of concealment appeared impossible; and she prevailed on her husband, a few hours only previous to his departure, to inform Mrs. Sedley of the steps they had taken.

She was of course greatly surprised and agitated at the information; but when her beloved daughter threw herself at her feet, and entreated her forgiveness, she could not withstand her distress; and throwing her arms around her, she sobbed out her forgiveness.—“Hubert,” she cried, “you should not have done this; but



may Heaven shed its blessings on your head, and forgive you as I do now!"

It was agreed that the marriage should be kept secret, and no one had the least idea of such an event ever having taken place. At last the moment arrived for their separation; their parting was such only as can be imagined; and Hubert at length relinquished the form of his agonized wife to the arms of her mother, whom also affectionately embracing, he breathed out his adieus, and rushed to the carriage in waiting for him.

He repaired to the house of his father previous to his embarking, who received him with such marks of affection and kindness, and held out such promises of his future intentions, that Hubert was quite delighted, and felt the sacrifice of a few months absence would be nothing to gain the favour of his father. He thought it most prudent to conceal from him his marriage, lest he should offend him by having acted so prematurely; and he parted from him, resting on his promises of

future reconciliation with Mrs. Sedley and her daughter.

No sooner had Hubert left his native shore, than his unworthy father began to deliberate on the best means to be taken to prevent his ever again meeting with Rosa, who, so far from intending ever to be reconciled to, he determined to pursue with the bitterest revenge; and he congratulated himself upon so easily having moved Hubert out of his way, as he should now have time to deliberate what course he should pursue with the unfortunate Mrs. Sedley and her daughter. Chance however, in this instance, favoured the wicked, and the unprincipled Grenville, for a while, triumphed in his revenge.

On the departure of Hubert, Mrs. Sedley strove all in her power to comfort her afflicted daughter, who felt happy in the assurance of her mother's forgiveness for the step she had taken: and when the earliest intelligence brought her a letter

from her husband, she felt a degree of happiness arise within her bosom. He had addressed her in terms of the most ardent affection, and besought her, for his sake, to keep up her spirits until his return.

The pleasing task of answering this letter afforded her new delight, and for a few weeks after she experienced a ray of comfort of which she had despaired: but, alas! how fleeting is all human happiness! short lived are our dreams of felicity, in which we for a while indulge; but too soon we awake to sad reality.

Mrs. Sedley was suddenly taken ill; Rosa was alarmed, and begged to send for medical aid, which Mrs. Sedley at first refused, thinking her illness of no serious consequence; but a few hours showed to the contrary. A physician was sent for, who pronounced his patient in great danger; and the agonized Rosa felt the dreadful conviction that she was about to be deprived of her last remaining parent. Mrs. Sedley was sensible of her approach.

ing end, though the power of speech was faint within her. She took the hand of her afflicted daughter, and begged her to be comforted.—“ I leave you, my child,” she cried, “ but I trust in safety; rest securely until the return of your husband, who I am sure will protect you from all further insult. I have no worldly affairs to settle,” continued she; “ they are already done; my will is in the hands of my attorney, and you will there see all my wishes.”

Rosa was too overcome to hear farther, and she sunk, fainting, by the side of her mother. When she recovered, she found a clergyman praying by the dying sufferer, who appeared anticipating the bliss she should enjoy in a happier state to come; and in a tranquil manner she resigned her soul to the hands of her Maker.

Rosa was at first so stupified with grief, that she was hardly sensible of her loss; but as reason returned, the bitterness of her situation recurred with double horror to her mind; and it required all the per-

suasion of the good clergyman to call fortitude to her aid. Incapable of giving any orders herself, she was advised by him to send for her late mother's attorney, who instantly obeyed the summons.

He brought the will of the deceased Mrs. Sedley, which he said his *clerk* had made out some time previous, and which it was now necessary should be read. In speechless grief, Rosa attended to this last form, and endeavoured to collect her thoughts sufficient to hear the wishes of her mother. Her tears and sobs however broke out, as she listened to the arrangements laid out for her funeral; but scarce could she believe the sentence which next caught her astonished ear. It proceeded to state, that as she, "the late Mrs. Sedley, being sensible of having enjoyed a fortune for many years, to which she considered she had no right, inasmuch as it had deprived Mr. Grenville of his inheritance through his father's last bequest, therefore to make all the restitution in her power, she had left the said Mr. Grenville

all her own estates and property, without reserve, excepting the sum of five hundred pounds, which was to be paid to her daughter Rosa on her decease; and that in case she should stand at any future time in need of assistance, she threw her on the generosity of the said Mr. Grenville, to whom she had now made all the atonement in her power." It further proceeded to state, that "the house in which she lived, together with all the furniture, were his, with immediate possession."

The astonishment of Rosa was so great at this unexpected declaration, that it took away all power of utterance. That Mrs. Sedley, so tender, so affectionate a mother, should thus have deprived her of the inheritance due to her birth, and thrown her on the generosity of a man whom she had always taught her to consider as her greatest enemy, so amazed and bewildered her senses, that she knew not what to think.

The attorney seemed also surprised at the smallness of the provision made for

Miss Sedley, and ventured to express her regret on the occasion; but added—"It was his duty of course to let Mr. Grenville know immediately, as his presence was necessary."

Forlorn and wretched, Rosa sought the solitude of her own chamber, where she endeavoured coolly to reflect on the strange will of her deceased mother, whose conduct she would not in the least arraign; too sacred was the respect she bore her memory to call her conduct in question; and she resolved patiently to submit to her last will and testament. She even reconciled her mind, in the hope that it would appease the wrath of Mr. Grenville, who would now perhaps look upon her with more complacency. She also reflected that she was actually the wife of his son, therefore she was placed beyond the reach of want; and as the families were now connected, it mattered not much which side had the disposal of her mother's property. To conceal her marriage, if possible, until the return of her husband, was her wish;



and between hope and fear she now remained until the arrival of Mr. Grenville, whom she wished, yet dreaded to behold.

## CHAPTER XII.

ON the following morning his name was announced, as, exulting in his great success, he had immediately travelled post on the news reaching his ears of the death of Mrs. Sedley. With a trembling step Rosa descended to the parlour. At such a time, and on such a melancholy occasion, her feelings were most acute—she was going for the first time to behold the enemy of her parents, and likewise a *father*, although he was himself in ignorance of the circumstance. She trembled violently as she entered the room—all was gloomy and dark; the closed shutters of the apartment gave but a dim and

imperfect light, and but half-revealed his countenance.

Hardened as he was in villainy, he was not quite free from emotion as he viewed the interesting orphan: in her he beheld the exact image of what her mother was when she first met his gaze; and the idea of the black deeds he had committed arose before his mind's eye. Shaking off all such feelings, he condescended to take the hand of the weeping girl, and condoling with her on her loss, assured her of his protection.

A little revived by this reception, the spirits of Rosa returned, and she replied to him in terms suitable to the occasion: neither mentioned the name of Hubert, and that subject remained in silence.

Spite of his assumed kindness to her, Rosa fancied she beheld a triumph sparkling in his eyes, which ill suited with his professions; and from the first interview she entertained a decided dislike to him. As soon as she possibly could, she withdrew from his presence, and confined her-

self to the solitude of her chamber, while he now, of course, gave all necessary orders.

At length the painful day arrived that was to consign the remains of Mrs. Sedley to the earth. The feelings of Rosa can be imagined, but they must not be described, since the task is too melancholy to portray: while the corpse of her mother laid in the house, she could steal in silence and privacy to weep over the loved features which, though sleeping in death, were yet calm and tranquil; but when this last, this melancholy comfort was denied to her, she felt doubly the forlornness of her situation.

Mr. Grenville remained for some few days in the house after the funeral, taking upon himself all orders, and acting, as he now really was, the master; and Rosa began to feel that she was now an intruder in that house which had been the abode of her infancy; and the necessity of seeking some other asylum arose upon her mind. Her heart seemed oppressed with

sorrow; she had no friend to whom she could unfold her grief, and the absence of her husband at such a period seemed as doubly distressing. From Mr. Grenville she feared she had nothing to hope, as he treated her with the utmost coldness, and never mentioned the name of his son, or even alluded to the prospect of a future connexion between the families. What distressed her more than all was, that she knew not where now to address her husband until he wrote to her again; and thus she was deprived of informing him of her present distress, or asking his advice how she should act.

At length Mr. Grenville informed her that he was going to London, in order to settle the affairs of her late mother, and as he expected he should be absent a few days, she *might* remain in the house until his return, when he should then wish to have some private conversation with her.

Rosa bowed in silence—tears prevented her utterance; and she saw him depart with a ray of pleasure which she had not

of late experienced. The manner in which he had told her she *might* remain there until his return, convinced her of his future intentions towards her, and she resolved to quit the house as soon as possible. The thought was agonizing; and whither to go she knew not; and she passed the time of his absence in forming schemes, which were as soon abandoned as suggested.

At length the painful moment of his return was announced, and Rosa again beheld him with a mixture of dread and emotion; he very shortly summoned her to his presence, and after a little preface, and in a haughty tone, he thus addressed her—"I should suppose, Miss Sedley, I may now venture to speak to you on a subject, which delicacy for your feelings prevented me doing before."

She bowed in silence, and he continued—"You must now, I think, be convinced, by the will of your late mother, that she was conscious of the vast injury she had done me. You will not, therefore, won-

der at the just feelings of dislike which have always borne to your family has, however, done me all the justice her death which she could, and I am satisfied. Here are receipts," said he, presenting her with some papers, "to the amount of five hundred pounds, being a legacy, and which I have invested in funds in your name; and any little cash which you may want for present purposes I am very willing to provide with."

Rosa, though wounded to the soul, deavoured to stammer out her thanks.

"For instance," added he, "here is a note for fifty pounds, with which I send you, in order that you may be able to supply your necessary wants, as I suppose I need not tell you that you have to seek another asylum, as I propose very soon to have a sale of these premises and effects, and of course you cannot, in any degree of delicacy, continue here."

Rosa shuddered at this unfeeling declaration; but thinking it wisest to comply



his favour if possible, she commanded her feelings so far as to assure him she would obey his wishes; and likewise thanking him for *his liberality*, she put the note in her pocketbook.

"I have now," resumed he, "also to speak to you on another subject, which is still more displeasing to me than all beside—my son Hubert, previous to his quitting England, spoke to me on a ridiculous attachment having subsisted between you, which, as it can never be sanctioned by me, you must now solemnly promise never to think of more."

The cheek of Rosa assumed an ashy paleness; her lips quivered, as she faltered out—"It is impossible—I cannot make any such promise."

"Cannot!" repeated he in a voice of fury—"by Heaven, you must and shall! do you suppose I would accept of an almost portionless girl as the wife of my son, the heir to an immense fortune?"

There was something so disgusting in this avowal, that had Rosa been free, her



pride would have prompted her to have withdrawn all claims on Hubert, let the sacrifice have cost her what it would; but the ties which now bound them prevented it, and she knew not what method to pursue; while Grenville poured forth a torrent of threats, and endeavoured to extort a promise from her that she would for ever conceal herself from the eyes of Hubert, or dread his everlasting revenge.

Overcome by his brutality, she was near fainting, and in the agony of her feelings she sunk at his feet, and acknowledged that she was the *wife* of his son. But what pen shall describe his rage! he pushed her from him with a violence that struck her to the ground, while he vented the bitterest curses on her head. In vain she implored his mercy—he vowed to pursue her with everlasting revenge; and at length ordering her to wait his farther commands, he left the room with a fury bordering on madness.

Left to herself, the wretched Rose vented her griefs by a flood of tears; she

had no one to whom she could communicate her sorrows; and that beloved being for whom she suffered so much, was away; and unable to afford her his protection. Still she hoped that when the passion of Mr. Grenville had subsided, he would become more reconciled; she had now avowed her claims, which he could not put asunder; and she flattered herself that he would permit her to remain in peace in some seclusion, until the return of her husband.

She now retired to her own room, where she remained for some few days, taking her meals there and alone, as Mr. Grenville did not summon her to the dinner-table. In painful reflections passed the tedious hours; it was in the dismal month of November, and all was dark without; a few stars alone gave light to the horizon; and Rosa, this hapless child of sorrow, prompted by an intuitive feeling of melancholy, stole forth in secret, to visit the grave of her mother.

On arriving at the churchyard, she ap-

proached the green turf under which that beloved parent slept in peace. Her tears watered the grass, as she leant on the tomb which enclosed the loved remains, and she sunk on her knees in fervent prayer.

She had remained some little time, when she was aroused by the sound of footsteps; the darkness would not permit her to discern objects, but she saw that some one approached; she trembled she knew not why, when in an instant her name was pronounced in the dreaded voice of Grenville.

"It is well," he cried, "that I find you here; it is a spot well calculated to my purposes; here death reigns around, an emblem of eternal silence, which must in future close your lips."

"What mean you, sir?" cried the terrified girl, rising from her knees.

He took her by the arm.—"Attempt not to stir," said he, "but hear what I have to say; know that I am not a character to be trifled with—my will shall be accom-

plished, let the sacrifice be what it may; and here I swear to leave you a rolling corpse by the side of your mother, unless you instantly comply with my desires."

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the distressed Rosa, as she saw a deadly weapon grasped in his hand; "oh, do not take my life!" she cried; "say, oh say your wishes!"

"Here then," said he, "here on the tomb of your mother—swear by every vow, human and divine, never to avow the secret of your marriage to any one, or even dare to seek Hubert on his return, but on the contrary, to live secluded for ever from his sight, or dare on your life to reveal to him your destination—in short, swear to relinquish all claims upon him, or your life shall be the result."

"Never," she exclaimed, "will I make such a vow! life on such terms is not worth preserving; therefore strike the blow and gratify your savage heart!"

"Darest thou thus to brave death?" he cried, as he raised the dagger in his hand.

"Thou shalt not meet it then, for that would be mercy to what I intend for thee! Hear now then my fixed, my irrevocable determination—for thou hast sealed the fate of Hubert as well as thyself! *he shall never live to return.* The assassin's steel can easily find its way to his heart in a foreign country, and I shall exult in a death that will save him from such a hateful connexion as thee, while thou shalt live to accuse thyself as being his murderer. In vain shall you dare to calumniate me—I will find means to recoil the accusation on thy own head; and, condemned by thy country, thou shalt mount the scaffold. In vain shalt thou plead thy innocence, for I will stand by and strengthen thy accusation until the last."

"Oh, horrible! most horrible!" frantically exclaimed Rosa; "thou surely wouldst not sacrifice the life of thy son?"

"As surely as you are now in my power!" interrupted he; "therefore say, and quickly too, whether you will save him from such a fate, for I swear, by all

powers, human and divine, he dies, unless you take the oath I require."

"Oh, save him!" she cried; "let all your vengeance fall on me, but save his life—I will do all you wish; my heart is breaking, but I will preserve my husband!"

"Swear then," said he, "and on the tomb of your mother, swear for ever to conceal your marriage, and never to reveal to Hubert the secret of your retreat."

He then dictated an oath too horrible to repeat, for ever to remove herself from observation. The gloom of the place, and the stillness of the hour, all combined to fill her soul with terror; no human aid was nigh, and

"——— Alone, forsaken, faint,  
Kneeling beneath his sword, fault'ring she took:  
The oath———"

and then sunk almost senseless on the cold ground.

"Enough!" said the savage Grenville; "thy oath is recorded among the tombs! Now mark me—before to-morrow's dawn



let me be rid of thy hateful presence. The world is wide enough to conceal thee in, therefore dare never to appear before me; thy fate is henceforward in my hands. If I never meet with thee more, thou art safe; but should you, by accident or design, cross my path, I will pursue thee with unrelenting hatred, thy character I will blacken with the darkest stains, whilst the least deviation from silence on thy part seals the *death of Hubert!* therefore farewell, and remember thy oath!"

A cold shivering ran through the frame of his unhappy victim, as she lay prostrate on the ground, and her senses for awhile became bewildered; but, alas! too soon reason returned, and pointed out the horrors of her situation. The dreadful fate to which she had consigned herself, drove her almost to madness; but it was to preserve the life of her husband, and she heroically endeavoured to submit to her destiny.

She arose from her recumbent posture, and cast her eyes fearfully through the gloom which surrounded her; but she



could not discern any one, and she was at length convinced that her persecutor had left her. In frantic agony she kissed the spot that contained the last remains of her beloved mother, whose untimely death had thus caused her to become the prey of a villain.

“ Well,” she mentally exclaimed, “ might that dear parent have shuddered with horror at the idea of her uniting herself to the family of Grenville !” and she now blamed herself for having agreed on a clandestine union with Hubert, since the result was so dreadful ; still the love she bore him was so sincere as to overcome all such thoughts ; but the idea that they were now parted for ever, drove her almost to madness. This too must be her last visit to this sacred spot, as she must go, she knew not whither ; but to remain any longer under the roof with Grenville was now impossible—it was painful to her feelings even to return to the house ; but necessity compelled her to secure what little property and apparel she could ; she

therefore, but in dreadful agitation, repaired to her late abode, fearful each minute of encountering Grenville. She hastened to her apartment, where, ringing for lights, she desired the attendant who obeyed her summons to leave her for the night.

The poor girl, with tears in her eyes, endeavoured to question Rosa as to the cause of her grief, so visible in her countenance. But sealed in silence, she gave a vague reply; while her attendant added that there was strange alterations about to be made in the house, for that Mr. Grenville had given warning to all the servants to quit immediately.—“But thought, ma’am,” continued she, “that I would speak to you about it, as I suppose you will still want an attendant on you.”

“My poor girl,” sobbed out Rosa, “I must henceforward do without. My spirits are incapable of conversation, therefore good night—God bless you.”

She now fastened the door of her apartment, and busied herself in packing

up whatever she could conveniently take. The note which the perfidious Grenville had given, she would have spurned with contempt, had not prudence whispered her that it would be of the utmost service to her in her present distress, since her jewels, and a few pounds, were all she could now command.

An idea flashed across her mind, that she had been, by some means, unlawfully deprived of her property, since she could not bring herself to believe that her beloved mother would thus have left her unprovided, and upon the generosity of such a villain; but to whom could she dare to make such an avowal? an oath of silence had passed her lips, and how could she proceed on vague suspicion only? for Grenville she knew would crush her to the earth, dare she but breathe such a thought.

For some hours she deliberated whither she should bend her steps, as she felt too much horror in the idea of again behold-

ing her persecutor. She therefore resolved to repair to the house of an old servant of her mother's, who resided about two miles distant, and there to determine on what steps to pursue for her safety and concealment. As soon, therefore, as it was daylight, she, with a heart almost bursting with agony, left the abode of her infancy, to go she knew not whither. She did not dare reflect, since that was madness; she therefore hurried on with agitated steps, until she arrived, faint and exhausted, at the house of Mrs. Smithson, who received her with wonder and apprehension for her present situation.

Commanding her feelings as much as possible, she briefly related her loss, and consequent dependant situation; and added, that as the new *heir* to the property was going to dispose of her late mother's house, she was compelled to quit it directly.

Mrs. Smithson was shocked at her situation, and insisted upon her taking both

refreshment and repose ; with which she complied, being dreadfully in want of rest. Here she remained all day, and endeavoured to collect her thoughts as to a future arrangement.

She must go where she was not likely to meet with her implacable enemy, since his threat sounded dreadfully in her ear. To Mrs. Smithson she was obliged to use deception, merely stating her wish to obtain some abode, until she could determine what plan to pursue, to gain the means of future subsistence.

Mrs. Smithson advised many plans, none of which Rosa could accede to, until she at length mentioned her knowledge of Mrs. Harrison.

Rosa caught at the idea, as she thought, in so respectable a house, she must at least be safe for a time, until she could determine how to act ; and fearing to stay in the same town with her persecutor, she urged Mrs. Smithson to give her a letter of introduction to Mrs. Harrison ; and on

the following day she commenced her journey to London, which was delayed a considerable time, in consequence of the heavy fog which overspread the atmosphere, and, as our readers will remember, it was a late hour when she first arrived in Bloomsbury-square.

### **CHAPTER XIII.**

ON finding that Rosa had really quitted the house, the perfidious Grenville rejoiced in the success of his schemes. He had accomplished the first step towards her separation from his son, and he doubted not to be equally fortunate in the completion of his plan; and every thing seemed to meet his wishes; for it so happened, that on the very same day on which Rosa left the house, that a letter arrived by post from Hubert. Grenville of course immediately secured this, and breaking the seal,

read the contents, where he found the intelligence given him by Rosa was indeed too true. Hubert had addressed her as his beloved *wife*, and in terms of the greatest tenderness, besought her to be careful of her health until his return, and assured her that he should know no peace until he was restored to her arms. He conjured her to write him immediately, and gave an address where to find him, as he had arrived in safety at the place of his destination.

This information, which would have given Rosa such satisfaction, was denied to her, who could not now, if she had wished ever so, have forwarded any communication to him whatever.

After the perusal of this letter, Grenville sat down to study what course he should pursue to deceive his son; and at length resolved upon the following plan. He addressed a most affectionate letter to Hubert, informing him of the death of Mrs. Sedley, and the total change which had taken place; adding, that in consequence



he had placed Rosa under his own protection, who had avowed her union with him; to which he added, he was quite reconciled; and on his return he should with pleasure yield his wife up to him. He then added, that as the spirits of Rosa would not allow her to write him herself, she had requested him to perform that office for her. He concluded by desiring his son to address all letters in future to his wife, under cover to himself, as it was uncertain where she might be found. By this contrivance he not only stopped all correspondence between them, but also gained the confidence of his son, by his supposed kindness to Rosa.

In a short time he repaired once more to his abode in London. After converting all the effects of the late Mrs. Sedley into money, and with a fortune sufficient to gratify his utmost ambition, he again plunged into all those extravagant excesses which so well suited his disposition. It was just at this period that he was appointed guardian to the Honourable Miss

Dashley, and she was immediately marked out by him as a prize, as her large fortune was too great for him to let it escape; and that she should be the future wife of Hubert, was his determination, no matter by what means. He soon found that Miss Dashley was very gay, and by no means inclined to submit to any restraint; and when she proposed residing with Mrs. Harrison, he made not the least objection, as it was too much trouble for him to watch her conduct with the care he ought to have done, and he contented himself with occasionally visiting her, and at every opportunity pouring into her ear the most rapturous praises of his absent son, to whom, he said, he should be proud, on his return, to introduce her.

Meanwhile that son was labouring under the greatest anxiety; on the receipt of his father's letter, he was much shocked to hear of the death of Mrs. Sedley, particularly as he well knew how much his Rosa must have suffered at the event. He felt much disappointed at her not having ad-

dressed a line to him herself, and though however great her grief, it was unkind. The next moment the anxiety of a husband rose with double weight. She was perhaps too ill, which his father in private had concealed from him. By the first conveyance he forwarded a packet to his father, with a letter enclosed to Rosa. In this he conjured her to write him directly, as he was distracted on her account; and assuring her of his everlasting affection, concluded by informing her that he had enclosed her a draft upon his banker to a large amount, fearing lest she might be in want of money; though, he added, he trusted the kindness of his father would prevent any thing of that kind.

Alas! this attached, this amiable husband, little knew that his unhappy wife was at that very time a wretched outcast, and almost deprived of the very means of existence. It is almost needless to add, that this letter was cautiously conveyed by the elder Grenville, who, as if the evil spirit of ambition had marked out as her

favourite, had become, by a most unexpected line of succession, the present lord Darlington.

Of this acquisition he now informed his son; and then, after condoling with him on the sad intelligence he had to communicate, informed him that his worthless wife had eloped with a lover, and with him left the country. He then conjured him to take no steps concerning her, as she had proved the baseness of her nature; and that he might now, of course, dissolve a connexion which had been known to no one, and which had never met his approbation. He likewise threw out hints as to the lady who he had now under his care, and whose immense fortune might be his, if, on his return to England, he behaved with the attention which he ought to Miss Dashley.

What pen shall describe the feelings of the wretched Hubert on the perusal of this letter! At first he thought it must be a dream, or a falsehood imposed upon him by his father; but then why had Rosa

been so long silent?—why had she never addressed him since the death of her mother? Alas! it was too plain, and he sunk in an agony of mind past description. But if he had any doubts on the subject, they were soon confirmed by another letter, which also reached him by the same conveyance. This was in the hand-writing of Rosa. With trembling impatience he tore the seal, vainly hoping to find a proof of her innocence; but, alas! she addressed him by openly avowing the step she had taken—conjured him to forget her—that she would never make any claims upon him whatever, and from that moment to consider himself as free, while she, in a foreign land, should enjoy happiness with her present lover; all attempt, she added, to trace them out, would be useless, as they had taken every precaution necessary for concealment.

Horror-struck, the agonized husband remained incapable of action: that she, whom he had adored, and whom he supposed blessed with the purity of an angel,

should thus have deceived him, was almost past belief! But did he not hold the fatal proof in his hands? from no other mouth would he have believed a word prejudicial to her honour, but from her own he could not be deceived, and he sunk a victim to a heart-rending grief; while his worthless father was triumphing in the success of his plans. Fearing lest Hubert would not believe the accounts of his wife's falsehood, he applied to an agent of his in villainy, to assist him in his designs. This man possessed the dangerous art of imitating any one's handwriting; and lord Darlington having previously possessed himself of papers written by Rosa, he placed them in the hands of his accomplice, and dictated the letter already mentioned, which so resembled the characters of Rosa, that the wretched husband was completely deceived, and lord Darlington now felt satisfied that he had for ever separated them.

Meanwhile Rosa had found a comfortable asylum in the house of Mrs. Harrison,



where she flattered herself that she could remain in safety until she could devise some eligible plan to pursue. But, alas! what was her horror and her terror to find that she should eventually give birth to an innocent object, which, under present circumstances, must involve her in apparent guilt and misery. The friendship of the amiable lady Charlotte gave her much comfort; but even to her she must appear as a lost, abandoned creature, since she did not dare to reveal to any one her real situation. The addresses of Mr. Horace also was a source of great anxiety to her, as it was impossible for her to accept them; and she became so surrounded with perplexities, that she knew not how to escape from them.

It will be remembered her visible agitation when Miss Dashley spoke of her guardian. With the title of lord Darlington she was quite unacquainted; but the mention of his son *Hubert* being abroad excited the greatest alarm in her bosom; she half suspected the truth; but so great



was her dread and horror of Grenville, that she feared to make such an inquiry, until the actual arrival of lord Darlington took place. The result of that visit will be remembered, while his lordship, astonished and enraged to find his victim in such a safe and honourable abode, resolved quickly to drive her from thence. His rage was also increased to madness as his penetrating eye instantly discovered *the true situation* of Rosa, and he mentally vowed that she should never live to bring an heir. Such an event as that he feared would of course lead to the discovery of the father, and eventually betray all his diabolical plans. His conduct in calumniating her character will now be accounted for; and the reason, while the wretched Rosa was still sealed in silence. At length, driven to desperation, she addressed that letter to him which Miss Dashley so dishonourably perused, and which, of course, she could not properly understand.

Again lord Darlington used the arts of dissimulation for the accomplishment of

his designs, and he wrote her an answer, couched in more kind terms than she expected, informing her, that out of compassion to her present state, he had provided her with a home in the house of Mrs. Powell, who would receive her with kindness—that she must pass as a widow, and there remain in secret, until she had given birth to an infant, and that he would remunerate Mrs. Powell; but that this was on condition of her still keeping her oath sacred; and that she must likewise leave Bloomsbury-square, without letting them know her intention, or that he had any hand in her removal.

This letter will be remembered by our readers, and likewise the circumstances of Rosa repairing to the house of Mrs. Powell, who was in fact no other than an abandoned woman, who had formerly been kept by lord Darlington. To this woman he had related a mixture of truth and falsehood respecting Rosa sufficient to answer his purpose, and offered her a large reward, if, by slow degrees, she would

infuse a deadly poison into the food of Rosa, so that she might never live to fulfil the dreaded event, and to take such necessary precautions as would ensure her from suspicion.

Tempted by the large reward, the wretched woman consented to his proposal, and readily agreed to receive Rosa, which she did with an over-officious care. Her own private opinion was, that she was a victim of his lordship's, of whom he wished to rid himself, as he had taken care not to reveal the circumstance of her being allied to his son. Struck, however, by her interesting appearance, even the heart of this depraved woman felt a sensation of pity for her inmate, and she gradually began to feel a remorse at having undertaken so dreadful a task as to take her life. Mrs. Powell, though a lost, a guilty woman, still shuddered at the idea of murder, and she yet delayed to use the means prescribed by lord Darlington, who was now travelling in search of his son. Hubert had left Holland, and no

farther intelligence could be gained of him, and his lordship began to fear that he should not accomplish his wish respecting his alliance with Miss Dashley.

It was at this time that Rosa first perceived the alteration in the spirits of Mrs. Powell, for which she could not account, who felt an increasing horror at the idea of destroying her innocent guest; and she resolved, if possible, to spare her life. But then she dreaded the vengeance of lord Darlington; and she knew not how to act, until she accompanied Rosa to the Bank, and became possessed of the knowledge of her having a sum of money in the funds.

Mrs. Powell was at that time intimate with a young man of the name of Davis, who was as depraved a character as herself, but who had had the address to ingratiate himself into the house of Mr. Sydenham. This Davis was also the villainous agent of lord Darlington, the very man who had done his black deeds, and who had written the forged letter to

Hubert Grenville. He had formerly been an attorney's clerk, and was the very man who had drawn up Mrs. Sedley's will, whilst residing with her solicitor. Since the residence of Rosa with Mrs. Powell, he had forbore to visit her at her house, fearing to excite suspicion in the mind of Rosa; and to him Mrs. Powell now openly revealed the plan which was laid against the life of Rosa, and her repugnance at the horrid deed.

From many circumstances which Mrs. Powell mentioned, Davis was convinced that Rosa was the daughter of the late Mrs. Sedley, and the victim to the arts which he had practised in the service of lord Darlington; and as Mrs. Powell declared she did not mind what steps she pursued, as long as she did not commit the act of murder, she agreed to elope with Davis from the power of lord Darlington, and to furnish themselves with the means by possessing herself of the property of Rosa, while Davis was to take advantage of the absence of Mr. Sy-

denham's family to accomplish his design. The plan pursued by this worthless pair is already known, while the unsuspecting Rosa too easily became their dupe. It is almost needless to add, that it was Mr Powell who, after administering a sleeping draught to Rosa, stole into her chamber in the dead of the night, and possessed herself of all her property, and then joining Davis, they, with their ill-gotten wealth, departed for a foreign land.

The distress of Rosa, on finding herself thus left destitute, will be remembered; but could she have known, the hand of Providence was stretched over her head, even at the moment when she thought herself the most distressed, as, by this event, her life had been preserved, which otherwise must have fallen a sacrifice to the arts of lord Darlington. Her consequent distress, until her meeting with the benevolent lady Charlotte, need not be repeated, who, though now, of course, believing her to be guilty, still resolved to protect her from farther ills; but when



by lucky chance, Rosa, in giving her her papers to peruse, accidentally presented her with the certificate of her marriage with *Hubert Grenville*, that amiable lady immediately comprehended the whole of her wrongs, and from that moment resolved to protect her, until she could place her in the arms of her husband. Nor could she sufficiently admire the heroic, the exemplary fortitude of our heroine, in thus, even at the expence of her own reputation, preferring all to risking the life of her beloved husband.

And now behold her, with her sweet infant, safely conveyed, under the protection of lady Charlotte and Mr. Montague, to Wales, while the former had solicited the favour of Miss Dashley's correspondence, in the idea that if Hubert Grenville should return to his native land, she should, by this means, hear of it, when it was her intention immediately to write, and acquaint him with the situation of his suffering, but innocent wife; thus freeing her from the crime of break-



ing an oath, which, though surreptitiously obtained, was still considered by our virtuous heroine as too sacred to break, and which she remembered always, with sacred horror, was made at the tomb of her mother.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

DURING this lapse of time the wretched colonel Sedley had remained a close prisoner within the ruins of Ruthvale Abbey, as, to his great sorrow and disappointment, no opportunity had presented itself to afford him the means of his escape; for, faithful to the interests of his employer, Barnard kept too strict a watch over his actions, to give him the least chance of emancipation from his gloomy abode. Confined in the solitary chamber to which Barnard had conveyed him, his life became a burden, and he now almost

wished that his hand had been successful in striking the deadly blow, since existence on such terms was worse than death itself. He now despaired of ever again seeing his beloved wife, and his feelings on her account were most acute. From Barnard he could gain no intelligence concerning her, as he in reality knew not whether she was in existence.

From such close confinement, the health of the colonel became affected, and Barnard, out of compassion to his melancholy situation, agreed to let him wander about the ruins, provided he would always wear a disguise, and never attempt to reveal himself to any one.

Glad to taste the blessings of the fresh air, the colonel agreed to these conditions, and Barnard shewed him the secret spring, by which he could open the door of his apartment, to which he was immediately to repair if any one approached. The only amusement which was afforded him was a flute, on which he used to play with a melancholy sweetness, which had

often met the traveller's ear with wonder, particularly as the sounds had issued from a spot it was impossible to ascertain; hence arose the report among the peasantry that the ruins were haunted, particularly when the colonel had been partially seen in his secret perambulations. His figure, which was naturally of great height, was augmented by a hat, surmounted by a large plume of black feathers, and a cloak of the same sable colour, which Barnard had procured him; and this had given rise to the name of the black spectre, which was said to wander about. This report aided the designs of Barnard, who also used to visit the tower of a night, and by making strange noises, and *illuminating* the apartment, completely strengthened the idea among the superstitious that the place was haunted, and no one would venture near.

Colonel Sedley assisted Barnard in his designs, in the vain hope, that if these reports once reached the ears of men of more enlightened minds, it might be the

means of causing a search to be made; and in such a proceeding, his situation might be discovered, and liberty procured him.

Forlorn, however, were his hopes; none had the courage to explore the tower, and years rolled on in the same gloomy way. The worm of care, and the hand of time, had now made a great alteration in the countenance of the once-handsome colonel Sedley; his face became wan and pale, and so tinctured with melancholy, that he might now very easily be taken for a spectre by those who gained an imperfect sight of him.

Many times had he resolved to attempt his liberty when emerging from the mysterious tomb; but, alas! the keen eye of Barnard was on his actions; and at length he abandoned all hope of escape, and resigned himself to his melancholy fate.

It will be remembered by our readers, the first visit of lady Charlotte and Mr. Montague, with Rosa, to these ruins, and on their attempting to ascend the stairs, their being alarmed at the noise which

proceeded from above. Barnard, who had watched their motions, was in the tower, and wishing to frighten them away, he threw down some loose stones, which deterred them from entering at that time. But Rosa, who felt a strange curiosity to behold the inside of the abbey, on a future evening, it will be recollected, succeeded in going alone to the ruins, where her ear was first assailed by the sounds of music, which issued from the concealed apartment of colonel Sedley, and which of course she could not discover.

The mysteries of this first visit will now be elucidated; as on her return from the tower, where she had been so surprised to see her own name written on the couch, she had wandered into the immense hall, where from the mysterious tomb the colonel was just issuing. On beholding a female figure, he was much agitated; he stood for a moment, hesitating how to act; but seeing the eye of Barnard upon him, who, unobserved by Rosa, was watching his actions, he waved his hand

in solemn motion, and instantly retreated through the door, while Rosa, greatly terrified, hastily departed; and Barnard proceeding immediately to the tower, *lit* up the wax tapers, which phenomenon struck the wondering eyes of Rosa. Notwithstanding her terror, she again took the opportunity of visiting the ruins, in order more clearly, in open daylight, to read those sentences which were written on the couch. It so happened, that the colonel was wandering in the tower at the time she ascended, and not being able to make his escape, he, on hearing footsteps, concealed himself under the couch, where, unobserved, he watched the actions of Rosa; her emotion on reading those mysterious lines will now be accounted for, as from the resemblance they bore to her own fate, she, in the moment of her grief, believed that her husband had actually been ensnared there, and murdered. This horrid supposition caused her to vent those exclamations which met the ear of the co-

lonel, who was astonished at the interest which this young and unknown female appeared to take in his fate: fearful lest Barnard should still be on the watch, he did not dare reveal himself; but prompted by his own feelings, he uttered those sentences which so appalled our heroine; his motive in so doing, was still his private hope in causing an alarm to be made; but when he found that she had actually sunk senseless, compassion superseded every other consideration, and he immediately emerged from his place of concealment, and raised her in his arms. She was quite insensible; and as he gazed upon her pallid though still beautiful face, he felt an indescribable emotion, for which he could not account; he thought she resembled his lost wife, and he felt a melancholy pleasure in supporting her senseless form: how little could this unhappy father imagine it was his own child that he was thus supporting, though nature clung round his heart, and prompted him to regard her with more than common feelings! Find-



ing she still continued in a strong fit, he bore her in his arms from the tower, and placed her in safety in the open air, where she in a short time revived. He felt, he knew not why, that he could not leave her, yet fearing every moment the vengeance of Barnard, he was moving away, when she opened her eyes, and fixed them on him with wonder and astonishment. He addressed her in solemn accents, when, issuing from the ruins, he beheld Barnard, who darted a look of fury on him, as he saw him conversing with Rosa.

The colonel instantly retreated, leaving her in the utmost astonishment; he immediately informed Barnard of the whole of the adventure, adding, that the lady had taken him for a supernatural being, which information satisfied him, and he resolved to strengthen her in her belief, for which purpose he followed her steps; and on Rosa asking him for a glass of water, he conducted her to the lodge, where, by his conversation, he endeavoured to

add fresh horrors on her mind, by the accounts he gave her of the abbey; what the colonel was privately hoping that this late adventure would be the means of his emancipation.

Alas! vain were his expectations, for the lips of Rosa were sealed in silence, and to her own bosom she confined the knowledge of this mysterious visit; but from this moment she resolved to absent herself from this spot of horrors; nor will it be wondered at the terror she felt. On the night of the storm, when lady Charlotte and herself were compelled to take refuge within its walls, the colonel was, as usual, indulging in his perambulations, and his pensive strains it was that so excited the wonder of lady Charlotte; but on his observing two female forms, he was compelled to retreat, which he instantly did through his mysterious door, the shutting of which caused the movement of the arrow in the hand of death, which, of course, so excited their alarm.

Having now elucidated the mysteries of

the abbey, we shall proceed to say, that Rosa, as it has already been stated, received a letter from the repentant Davis, in which he acknowledged that he, at the instigation of lord Darlington, had drawn up a forged will, which had been produced as that of Mrs. Sedley, unknown to his master, the solicitor of that lady; the real one he enclosed to her; and Rosa now beheld that *that* adored parent, instead of depriving her of her inheritance, had bequeathed every shilling of her property to her; and that, in fact, she was the heiress to immense wealth. Her feelings on this occasion may readily be conceived: so important a discovery almost overpowered her. Now was the base Darlington in her power, since his *life* would be forfeit by the act of forgery. Davis also acknowledged the letter which he had sent to her husband, and thus she became acquainted with the arts which had also been practised against him.

Shuddering at the idea of bringing her husband's father to public disgrace, she,

contrary to the advice and wish of Mr Montague and lady Charlotte, wrote to lord Darlington, to inform him of the discovery now made, and offered him a full pardon, if he would agree to restore her to her rights; and it will be remembered the agitation under which she laboured, as she awaited his answer, which did not arrive.

Fortune had now appeared to take a different turn, for lord Darlington was suffering the greatest torture, in the failure of his hopes. In vain had he travelled over all parts of the kingdom, in hopes to gain intelligence of his son, of whom he could hear nothing; and on his return from one journey it was that the letters of Rosa reached him, wherein she informed him of the elopement of Mrs Powell, and her consequent destitute situation. This account enraged him almost to madness, since his victim had now escaped from his power; and by the length of time which had now elapsed, he knew not where to find her; and he lived in continual dread of her openly avowing

her claims, and presenting her infant heir. His designs upon Miss Dashley he also feared would be frustrated, as Mr. Lorimer was evidently her favoured lover, and Hubert nowhere to be found. At length he heard from his ward the account of Rosa and her child being in safety, under the protection of lady Charlotte, in Wales.

This intelligence filled him with the utmost dismay, since he feared that she would eventually betray all to such noble friends, and he formed plans in his own mind, again to drive her from her peaceful abode; but hearing of some information, which he thought would prove the means of finding the long-lost Hubert, he again left London, to commence his search. This, however, like all the rest, proved futile; and after a short absence he returned to town. Here a source of great vexation awaited his arrival; for on visiting at Mrs. Harrison's, he was informed that Miss Dashley had eloped with the amiable Mr. Lorimer a few days previous.

It is needless to add his rage on the op-

casian; here was now the grand prize torn from his grasp, which he had involved himself in such sin to obtain; and he invoked curses on the head of all parties, particularly his unhappy son, who, by his absence, had thus lost the golden prize; and on his receiving a letter from Mr. Lorimer, in which he informed him of their union at Gretna Green, and soliciting his pardon, he returned an answer full of invective, declaring that he would never more see his late ward; and that as her father was expected home very soon, he should leave it to him to act as he thought fit as to the disposal of her property.

Scarce had he recovered the rage into which this event had thrown him, when another unexpected and more dreadful blow met his ear; this was no other than the letter of Rosa, stating the discovery which she had made. Maddened at this unexpected disclosure, his passions already bordering on frenzy, rendered doubly so by this event, raged with fury; he felt that he was now indeed in the power of

that being whom he had so cruelly injured, and his own conscience whispered him, what right had he to expect mercy from the hands of her whom he had pursued with such remorseless vengeance?—"She dies!" exclaimed he, in a voice of fury; "too long has she lived for my peace and safety." The idea of Ruthvale Abbey presented itself to his mind; it was now, he reflected, fortunate her near residence to that place, to which he resolved she should be ensnared, and with his own hand he resolved to strike the blow; for this purpose he again left London, and repaired in privacy to Wales.

On making his appearance before Barnard, he was much surprised, and felt some degree of terror lest colonel Sedley should betray himself.

Lord Darlington requested Barnard to conceal him in his lodge, to which, of course, he was obliged to accede; and he took the first opportunity of informing his prisoner of the presence of his enemy.

To reward him for his services, he



to whom he made him swear not to reveal himself.

The feelings of the colonel, on hearing that his base persecutor was so near him, were most acute, and he resolved, if possible, to awaken him to a sense of remorse, in the idea of his spirit wandering beneath the ruins.

Lord Darlington now took upon himself the task of watching the actions of our heroine, whose abode he very easily discovered. Sufficiently disguised to elude her observation, he watched her in all her walks, and at length beheld how frequently she visited at Llewellyn Castle. Still he knew not how to get her in his power, as force would excite alarm, and deprive him of his victim. He therefore resolved to possess himself of her child, which he did by taking it from the unsuspecting Mary, as has been related. This treasure obtained, he hastened with it to Barnard, who concealed it within his lodge, while the savage grandfather beheld it without one feeling of sympathy

for its affinity towards him; on the contrary, he viewed it with hatred and revenge; and he could almost have destroyed the life of this innocent being, had he not thought he must use it as the means of decoying its mother.

The poor child, torn from the arms of its kind protectors, drooped in evident dejection; and its cries were a source of alarm to the guilty pair, fearing lest they should be heard, and cause inquiry. For this purpose, it was taken within the ruined abbey, and colonel Sedley, in secret astonishment, witnessed the situation of the poor baby, for whom he felt a strong degree of interest; while the wretched lord Darlington took delight in its agony, as being a descendant of the unfortunate Rosa: but an All-Merciful Providence, who alone knows when it is meet and just to strengthen the afflicted, caused that this circumstance should be the means of bringing about that event which lord Darlington had taken so much pains

to prevent—that of a meeting between Hubert and Rosa.

It was now agreed, that the first time Rosa was observed walking alone, that Barnard should ensnare her to the abbey, where the sight of her child was to ensure her approach. For this purpose, on the evening before alluded to, lord Darlington, who was on the watch, observed Rosa take the path to the abbey alone. This was an opportunity not to be lost; he hastened back to the lodge, and sending Barnard to approach her with the pretext of bringing her to her child, he, taking the infant, ascended the tower, where he waited in savage exultation the approach of his victim, whom he vowed, with a dreadful oath, should now fall beneath his hand.

This sentence, and some other mysterious conversations between him and Barnard, had been overheard by colonel Sedley, who, though not able to comprehend its real meaning, was convinced some black deed was about to be perpetrated.

which he resolved, if possible, to prevent. It so chanced, that he was in the fatal chamber in the tower when lord Darlington entered with the child, and the colonel had no other chance than by concealing himself under the before-mentioned couch, where, of course, he was an unknown observer of all that passed. He soon heard the voice of Rosa supplicating for her child, which, as a stranger, he resolved, even at the risk of his life, to restore to her; but when lord Darlington, in his dreadful imprecations, revealed the truth of the murder of her father in that very room, Nature immediately suggested the whole truth, and the colonel was convinced that it was his own child for whom he was thus interested. Careless of his own fate, and regardless of his oath, at such a moment as that, he emerged from his place of concealment, and arrested the deadly weapon from the grasp of the perfidious Darlington, at the moment he was about to destroy his child. His unexpected appearance at such a moment as this,

overpowered the guilty wretch, who, pronouncing his name, sunk in a violent fit on the ground—an awful and convincing proof, that however we may for awhile disregard the dictates of conscience, a time must come when the never-failing monitor shall reach the inmost recesses of the heart; and though for awhile guilt may reign triumphant, yet the hour shall arrive, when justice shall usurp the place of cruelty and oppression; while innocence shall resume her rights, and with truth and virtue for her companions, shall triumph over her enemies, and finally become an earthly example of the superiority of a life well spent, in a religious and firm reliance on the will of a divine Providence, to those who waste the precious gift in actions the most depraved.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE above explanation, which was given by Rosa and her father, clearly elucidated the whole of the mysteries which had transpired, and each could not but admire the striking wisdom of a Power Supreme, that had thus guided the steps of those so apparently separated for ever in this world, so near to each other—a convincing proof that the hand of Providence is ever directed towards those who place an implicit reliance on his will.

The feelings of the colonel were indeed most acute, as he heard of the persecutions to which his child had been exposed; and he resolved, in the first moments of his anger, to punish lord Darlington for the daring act of which he had been guilty, in forging the will of the late Mrs. Sedley.

Rosa heard this declaration with horror; for the sake of her husband she would have wished it to have been for ever buried in oblivion, and she hoped, after the first feelings of rage were over, to persuade her father to abandon any such ideas; but it cannot be wondered at that his sensations must be most acute on such an occasion, when he reflected on what his child had been made to suffer, that she, the heiress to an immense fortune, should have been driven destitute to perish in the streets, was dreadful, and he thought no punishment could be too great to inflict on the author of her sufferings.

Both father and daughter had had so much to unfold to each other, that a late hour of the night arrived before they retired to their respective apartments. The mind of Rosa was too busied in reflection to admit of sleep; the events which had transpired were almost past belief; while the joy she felt at having her beloved child restored to her arms, was indescribable; and to be under the protec-



tion of a father too, was a happiness even unlooked for: one only wish now remained, once more to behold her husband; and with impatience she awaited the time when she might expect his return from London.

Early the following morning, lady Charlotte, accompanied by Mr. Montague, flew on the wings of friendship to the cottage of Rosa, and with true affection, warmly embraced the restored infant, for whose fate she had been so truly solicitous. They were next introduced to the colonel, who, in grateful terms, expressed his thanks for the kind protection they had afforded to his child; and now from the lips of lady Charlotte did he hear a confirmation of the heroic virtues and unparalleled sufferings of his Rosa, whom he now felt proud to call his daughter.

Lady Charlotte also spoke in the highest terms of Hubert Grenville, and the colonel endeavoured to banish all unfavourable impressions concerning him, and to prepare his mind to receive him as his son.

Colonel Sedley now consulted Mr. Montague, as to what steps he should take against the wretched lord Darlington. The cheek of Rosa turned pale at this question; the agony of her beloved Hubert, on such an occasion, painted itself before her mind's eye, and she once more ventured to entreat for mercy for the unfortunate culprit.

“Has he ever evinced the least towards you, my child?” said her father; “has he not, on the contrary, pursued you with the most unrelenting cruelty, and deprived me of my liberty for upwards of twenty years? say what that man deserves whose conduct has thus ruined the peace of an innocent family for ever?”

“I acknowledge,” replied Rosa, “that from justice he merits all you could desire; but let us not, my father, be deaf to the voice of mercy. Allow me to quote our immortal bard on the occasion, who says—

“We do pray for mercy,  
And that same pray’r should teach us all  
To render the deeds of mercy.”

"See," cried lady Charlotte, addressing the colonel, "the angelic spirit of forgiveness which breathes through the lips of your daughter: surely, if there is such a thing upon earth as *perfection*, that being who can thus forget her own wrongs, and even plead for the author of them, must approach the nearest claim to that title."

"The more I see of her amiable qualities, madam," replied the colonel, "the more resentment I feel towards the wretch who has dared to destroy her fair fame and happiness; nor can I consent to let him escape entirely from the hands of justice. It is true, I left him last night chained to the earth with horror; my unexpected appearance may have had the effect of striking his guilty soul with repentance, which we will endeavour to ascertain."

The colonel then proposed, that in company with Mr. Montague, and some trusty servants, to prevent all farther treachery, that they should visit Barnard

at his lodge, and ascertain the true state of lord Darlington.

This proposal somewhat alarmed Rosa, fearing to trust her father within those fatal walls, from whence he had been so providentially released. Mr. Montague however assured her, that he would pledge himself to bring the colonel back in safety, since the dangers and mysteries of that place were now over.

Rosa however could not quite dissipate her alarm on their departure, while her ever amiable and considerate friend stood with her during their absence. It was now that Rosa took the opportunity of relating to lady Charlotte the whole of her terrors at visiting the "Ruins of Ruthvale Abbey;" and most sincerely did her ladyship sympathize with our heroine in the horrors she had sustained; while the recollection of what she herself had felt on the night of the storm made her almost shudder; though she now rejoiced to think the cause of her alarm was elucidated; and she declared she should like to

visit the concealed room, and explore the ancient edifice, now that it was divested of its terrors.

The morning was far advanced ere they beheld the return of the gentlemen, for whom Rosa felt truly anxious ; the future fate of lord Darlington seemed to hang upon this visit, and she dreaded the result. Alas ! his fate was already sealed ; justice could not reach him from earthly powers ; his doom was in the hands of a higher tribunal, and to whose mercy we look forward with confidence and hope.

The colonel had found Barnard in no very enviable state of mind, owing to the situation of lord Darlington, and the escape of his prisoner, he knew not where. Dreading the vengeance of his lordship, he had returned on the preceding evening to the tower, where he beheld the guilty man, lying on the ground in a strong convulsion fit.

In vain he attempted to restore him to animation ; he dared not call for any assistance, lest it should discover the events

which had transpired; and at length, as the only plan for security, he raised him in his arms, and bore him to the concealed chamber, so lately the prison of colonel Sedley.

Here he passed an anxious night, during which time lord Darlington shewed signs of returning life; but reason had evidently forsook its throne; he raved incessantly on the name of colonel Sedley, whose murdered spirit, he exclaimed, was before his eyes; and in vain Barnard endeavoured to sooth or calm his distempered fancy.

In this distressing state he was found by the colonel and Mr. Montague, who cautiously approached his bed-side. The wretched man appeared to view them without the least recognition; but continued raving, and in apparent pain. Barnard, in his turn, trembled in the presence of colonel Sedley; he dreaded, now that he was restored to liberty and his friends, lest he should inflict a punishment on his head, for his conduct towards him.

The colonel saw his terror, and in the presence of Mr. Montague, he promised to use no harsh measures towards him, if he would from henceforward be faithful to his interests, and in the event of lord Darlington recovering his intellects, he would bind himself down to prove the injuries which he had sustained from the hands of his lordship.

As a drowning man is glad to catch at a reed, so was Barnard to cling to the last hope he had; and he solemnly promised to Mr. Montague that he would prove the violence which had been practised against the colonel, in depriving him of his liberty.

Finding that nothing could be done with respect to lord Darlington, they left the abbey, but desired Barnard to give him every possible attention, and that they would send medical aid. For this purpose Mr. Montague conducted the colonel to the house of a physician whom he knew, and relating in confidence a part of those circumstances which would



otherwise have appeared as mysterious, he requested that he would visit the wretched invalid. This the worthy doctor promised to do immediately, and to give his opinion as to the danger of his patient; and the colonel and Mr. Montague then returned to the cottage.

This account greatly distressed Rosa, on account of her husband, whose feelings she knew would be most poignant on the occasion: she wished, yet almost dreaded his return, in consequence of the dreadful news which she had to communicate, and her spirits sunk between hope and fear.

In the course of the day they learnt from the physician that lord Darlington was in the greatest danger; that his violent paroxysms had caused the rupture of a blood-vessel; and that a few days would evidently terminate his life.

In consequence of this information, the colonel now much wished for the return of Hubert, to consult with him on the necessary arrangements to be made, since

lord Darlington was not now in a state to proceed against.

As soon as Rosa could recover her spirits, she paid a visit to her aunt, lady Editha, to whom she related the almost miraculous restoration of her father. It is needless to paint the surprise of her ladyship and sir Owen, who expressed their impatience to behold their new-found relation; and ordering their carriage, they accompanied Rosa back to her cottage, where they were introduced to the colonel.

Lady Editha evinced great emotion at the sight of the husband of her favourite niece, and both shed the tear of sorrow at her premature departure from life. The colonel appeared much pleased with sir Owen, whom he felt proud to acknowledge as his relation; while he and lady Editha requested the colonel to make Llewellyn Castle his home; and these new-found relatives appeared willing to enjoy the happiness afforded them in this

unexpected dispensation of Providence in restoring them to each other.

Meantime Hubert Grenville had arrived in London, and on proceeding to the house of his father, was informed that he had left town, but none of the servants knew where he was gone, or for how long. This intelligence greatly perplexed him, but resolving nothing should detain him from his beloved Rosa, he immediately returned to Wales. The anxiety he felt with regard to his lost child retarded the happiness he would otherwise have experienced at the restoration of his wife; and as he arrived nearer to his late abode, his feelings became more and more acute. He, of course, expected to find Rosa still with lady Charlotte, at Rosewood Hall, but as he must necessarily pass very near to his own cottage before he could arrive there, he thought he would make an inquiry respecting his child.

For this purpose he ordered the carriage to stop, when the sight of a female figure leading a child rivetted his atten-

tion. He leaned his head from the carriage window, and through the iron gate which led to his abode, he plainly beheld his Rosa walking; in one hand she led a child, and at her side, with his arm through hers, was a gentleman, whose features were entirely unknown to him. A suspicious pang shot across his heart, as springing from the carriage he rushed into the garden, on a servant answering the gate.

Rosa in an instant beheld him, and uttering a scream of joy, she threw herself into his arms. Hubert tenderly embraced her. Language seemed denied to each, until Rosa, catching her cherub child, presented it to its father, who received it with transport. — "Oh, my Rosa!" he cried, "I have much to ask—I am impatient to know how you have regained our sweet infant; but so long as I clasp it in my arms, I am satisfied."

"Oh, Hubert," replied Rosa, "I have much to unfold—I have another dear re-

lative to present to you; whose presence will indeed astonish you."

She looked towards her father, from whose side she had flown at the appearance of Hubert, while colonel Sedley had stood an attentive observer of their meeting: he was closely examining the features of Grenville, when, to his great joy, he beheld not the least resemblance to his guilty father; on the contrary, his countenance was expressive of every virtue, and candour and integrity beamed forth in his expressive eyes; thus far satisfied as to his external appearance, he advanced towards his daughter, who taking his hand, presented him as her *father*.

The surprise of Hubert may be conceived; the colour fled his cheek, as grasping the colonel by the hand, he attempted to speak, but his emotion checked his utterance, and the words died upon his lips.

Rosa now led the way to the house, where mutual inquiries took place; and after preparing the mind of Hubert, she informed him of the events which had

taken place since his departure, and the consequent dangerous state of his father.

The horror he felt during this recital was strongly depicted in his expressive countenance; he glanced a look of anxious inquiry towards the colonel, whom he feared must be prejudiced against him, in consequence of the guilt of his father.—

“ Oh, sir,” he exclaimed, “ what am I to expect, from you? you will view me as the cause of your angelic daughter’s sufferings, and spurn me from you with contempt; and after the injuries you have sustained from my unhappy parent, I cannot—dare not ask to be received as your son; yet if you knew the feelings of this heart, you would be induced to pity me—a heart so devoted to your Rosa, that nothing can supply her place. I have already known what it is to lose her, and I must part with life ere I yield my claims.”

“ Be composed,” replied the colonel; “ I already know all your sufferings on her account; from her lips I have heard a faith-



ful narration of past events. The sentiments which I feel towards your father, your own heart will tell you; I will not wound your ears by a repetition; you, although his own son, have not escaped his diabolical arts: but though I feel the utmost detestation for his character, let me not be unjust towards his innocent offspring; your virtues merit my esteem, and from this moment I receive you as my son."

Hubert sunk on his knee as the colonel tenderly embraced him.—"If," said he, "a heart devoted to your beloved daughter, and a life henceforward dedicated to her happiness, can entitle me to your regard, you may ensure them both. Alas! too keenly I fear for my own peace, do I feel the wrongs you have sustained; for even amidst the joy I feel, the unhappy author of my being will rise before my eyes, and check my felicity."

"Happiness unalloyed," replied the colonel, "is never intended to be enjoyed on earth; the cup of life is mixed with sweets



and bitters, the latter acting as an whole-some ingredient, teaching us to view this state in a proper manner, and by weaning us from its false joys, enable us to raise our hopes to that bright world, where neither pain nor sorrow await our steps—where, freed from those corrupt and earthly passions which make men devils, we shall reap the full reward of our merits.”

Hubert remained silent; the future state of his guilty father rushed upon his mind, and the unbidden tear stole down his cheek.

Rosa read his feelings, and endeavoured to comfort him. Her own heart felt a ray of joy she had not experienced for years. She was restored to her father, her husband, and her child, the three dearest beings who could entwine around her heart; and her gratitude on the occasion was unbounded.

As soon as Grenville had recovered from the fatigue of his journey, he expressed a wish to see his father, whom he flattered himself he should yet awaken to a sense of

remorse, and the colonel accompanied him to the abbey.

Barnard gave most distressing account of his patient, who, he said, had had no interval of reason, and the physician had pronounced him near his end.

Hubert approached his bedside, where, spite of his wrongs, he could not but feel for his unhappy father, who was sinking under the weight of his own guilt.

Lord Darlington fixed his eyes on his son. A momentary sensation of horror seemed to cross his mind; but in an instant insanity returned, and he raved in a dreadful manner. He called upon the names of Rosa and his son, sometimes imploring their forgiveness, and at others venting execrations on their heads.

The scene was almost too much for Grenville to sustain; but as the physician had declared he could not live through the night, he resolved not to leave his bedside, hoping that he might yet have an interval of reason. The colonel humanely offered to stay also, and word was sent to

Rosa of their intention, who now felt great agitation for the welfare of her father and her husband.

The night proved an awful one. In vain did Hubert endeavour to make himself known to his father; no symptom of reason displayed itself over his distorted countenance, until at length, from a violent fit of delirium, he sunk exhausted into a deep sleep, which Barnard said was the first he had enjoyed. With what anxiety did his injured son watch his slumber, from which he anticipated a happy result! and when after a few hours he beheld him awake, he took his burning hand, and gazed on his face. Lord Darlington opened his eyes, but sight was evidently dim within him. He fixed them on Hubert, while the colonel drew back, fearing again to disturb his senses by his appearance; and Hubert, forgetting his wrongs at such a moment as this, addressed him in terms of kindness.

"My son," feebly exclaimed the dying

man, "do I once more behold you? but oh! to what purpose? I have involved you in misery, and you will curse my memory."

"Oh, no, no," replied Grenville; "live to atone thy errors, and all shall be forgiven."

Lord Darlington mournfully shook his head, and immediately relapsed into a state of insensibility, from whence he no more recovered, and Hubert received his last sigh on his shoulder.

From the terrible raving fits which he had experienced, all around had apprehended a more dreadful end; but nature was exhausted within him, and a death-like stupor had succeeded his delirium. Hubert felt most acutely the shock; had he witnessed any symptoms of contrition in his unhappy father, or seen him raise a prayer to Heaven for mercy, it would have given him some consolation; but as it was, he feared he had died with his unrepented sins on his head. The only hope at which he caught was the

sentence which his father uttered; some little gleam of repentance might be seen from those few words; and he trusted that the pangs he had suffered in his delirium might prove as some atonement in the eyes of Him who alone shall judge our actions. The guilty lord Darlington was now gone to answer for his sins at that tribunal where all hearts are judged, and where, in the true spirit of a Christian, let us hope his crimes were pardoned, through the mercy of Him who washeth away the tears from the eye of the sinner.

This awful event cast a gloom over the heads of Hubert and his lovely Rosa, though the latter, with true religion, admired the wise direction of Providence, in thus removing lord Darlington from shame and disgrace, which must at least have been his fate on earth; and her gentle heart could have known no happiness, had she been obliged to punish the father of her husband; as it was now restored to fame and peace, she experienced no reward for all her sufferings; her bosom

was the seat of honour and integrity ; and in the conviction of having acted a conscientious part, her sorrows were more than repaid ; whilst her husband, now *lord Darlington*, looked up to her with admiration and love ; and never were a more truly attached pair.

After the last solemn duties had been paid to the late lord Darlington, Hubert directed his solicitor to restore to colonel Sedley and his daughter the whole of the immense property of which they had been so basely deprived. The business was conducted with as much privacy as possible ; and thus lord Darlington was saved the pangs of exposing the guilty conduct of his father.

Colonel Sedley saw so many noble qualities emanate from his new-found son-in-law, that he soon regarded him with parental affection ; and retaining only a sufficient sum to support him in comfort during the remainder of his life, he settled a splendid portion on his charming daughter.



ter, as a proof of his love, and approval of her marriage.

Amidst the hearts who rejoiced at the happiness of our heroine, was that of the amiable lady Charlotte, whose firm and steady friendship had been the principal means of restoring her to her friends ; and *lady Darlington* always acknowledged with humble gratitude the vast obligation she owed to that exemplary lady.

It was the wish of lord Darlington to take his lady for a short time to London, though both declared that the Vale of Clwyd should ever be their permanent place of abode, since it had been the spot so auspicious to their happiness. But as his beloved Rosa had suffered so much in the eyes of Mrs. Harrison and her family, he was resolved to present her in her true character, and to shew them the triumph of virtue over cruelty and oppression.

Colonel Sedley, who declared he would never more separate from his beloved child, agreed to accompany them on their journey ; therefore taking a tender farewell of



their friends at Llewellyn Castle, and lady Charlotte, who wept at parting with lady Darlington, they repaired to London, and took up their abode at the house of the late lord Darlington.

Here our heroine was introduced to the world in her true sphere; and as soon as she was settled, she wrote a note to Mr. Harrison, and her friend Mrs. Horace, to say she was in town.

Convinced of her innocence, they both flew to see her; and most affecting was the meeting between her ladyship and the fair Emily: and when lord Darlington presented his lovely wife to Mrs. Harrison, as a being who had suffered the utmost persecution, though an exalted example of patience and virtue, that lady entreated her pardon for the suspicions she had once entertained.

Lady Darlington, with the utmost sweetness, accepted of her excuse, and kindly inquired after Mr. Horace.

Emily replied, he was well, and highly respected in his sacred office; while Rosa

acknowledged the vast obligation she was under to the worthy Charles.

On hearing of the happiness of lady Darlington, he was also truly rejoiced; happy in the affections of his beloved Emily, he had conquered all former impressions from his bosom; he therefore now felt, in the true spirit of benevolence, a pure delight in finding that so lovely a being as Rosa was as pure within as her countenance was so truly beauteous.

Amidst the brilliant prospects which now surrounded our happy heroine, she did not forget her lowly, but staunch friend, poor Mrs. O'Flaherty; therefore ordering her carriage, she proceeded, accompanied by his lordship, to the abode of poverty.

The surprise of the Irishwoman at seeing such grand folks may be imagined; but when she recognized our heroine, her joy was unbounded, and she eagerly inquired after her *sweet babe*.

Lady Darlington replied by giving her permission to come and see it at her house,

which so rejoiced the heart of this worthy creature, that she cried for joy; while lord Darlington, whose feelings upon the occasion, as he beheld the wretched hovel which had given birth to his child, were most acute, presented the poor woman with a sum so much beyond her expectation, that she alternately cried and laughed with joy.

We must also add, that she availed herself of the permission given to visit her sweet infant, and was much surprised and delighted to behold the growth and alteration in that lovely child.

After passing a few months in the gay metropolis, lord and lady Darlington, with colonel Sedley, once more returned to their friends in Wales. The cottage had been enlarged and repaired during their absence, as Rosa had declared that sweet place would ever be regarded by her with delight; and here, in calm and uninterrupted happiness, they took up their abode. The circle of their acquaintance was sufficient, in the families of lady Editha, Mrs.

ellyn, the ladies Charlotte Montague and Athlyn, with lady Melbourne, to promote their comfort, and all kept up the most friendly intercourse together.

Colonel Sedley, with great generosity, settled an annual sum on the repentant Barnard, who preferred to live in solitude and prayer during the remainder of his life, within the walls of Ruthvale Abbey; while this spot, divested of its late horrors, was frequently visited by our little party, and each mystery being now unravelled, it was viewed with admiration and delight. Thus were the clouds of obscurity, which had so long hung over their heads, dissipated by the cheering rays of sunshine and prosperity. Long—oh! long may its gleams shed its influence over our happy circle! May all who have experienced the bitter cup of sorrow in this transitory state, be at length rewarded with the same felicity as attended the steps of lord and lady Darlington! blest with each other, they glided through the stream of life, a blessing to themselves

and all around; while the colonel felt all the happiness which his past sufferings would allow; but as he gazed on his daughter, a tear would obtrude, as in her he traced an exact resemblance of that wife, from whose arms he had been so cruelly torn, to whom however he looked forward, in the hope of meeting again

"In that blessed state,  
Where neither pain or grief await."

Lord and lady Darlington endeavoured to render his life as pleasing as possible, nor were their efforts in vain. He regained his health and cheerfulness; and beheld, with real joy, the happiness enjoyed by his children; whilst they, taught by their former sufferings, knew how to enjoy the blessings by which they were now surrounded; and those alone who have been visited by the hand of affliction, know how to appreciate the precious gift of peace and felicity. Ye happy few, thus favoured by fortune, oh! value her choicest gifts; but remember that inward

peace can be obtained only through the medium of a steady adherence to truth, and rectitude of conduct, such as displayed itself in the actions of Rosa; and to conclude, in the words of Mrs. Hannah Moore—

Oh! let not those presume to judge of joy,  
Who ne'er have felt the pangs which absence gives;  
Such tender transports those alone can prove,  
Who long, like me, have known disastrous love.

The tears that fell, the sighs that once were paid,  
Like grateful incense on the altar laid,  
The lambent flame rekindle, not destroy;  
And woes remember'd, heighten present joy.

FINIS.

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